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# Supreme Court criticized as being too powerful

**Alan Doerksen**

OTTAWA – Is Canada really a democracy, or a dictatorship run by the nine unelected judges on the Supreme Court? Some concerned Christians argue that the court is exercising too much power, bypassing Canada's elected governments. They trace this back to the Charter of Rights, which was created in 1982, and which some suggest has encouraged people to turn to the Supreme Court to enshrine their favorite "right" into the Constitution.

In late May, the Supreme Court made its latest ruling: calling on the Ontario government to give gay couples the same rights as heterosexuals who can qualify for support payments when their common-law relationships break up. Ontario Premier Mike Harris, in the midst of the recent election campaign, quickly agreed to follow the court's recommendations. But Alberta Premier Ralph Klein has indicated his province might use the Charter's "notwithstanding clause" to override the decision's effects on Alberta.

Ian Hunter, a professor emeritus of law at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario, describes the latest decision as a typical Supreme Court decision: the court is "the hectoring nanny" of Canada.

## No accountability

Hunter asserts the court is anti-democratic, and "so far removed from daily life in Canada" that its members live in an "artificial ether." Members of the court are appointed until age 75, all drawn from the same profession, and are accountable to no one, he observes.

In the last few years, there has been a trend of various activists taking issues of concern to the Supreme Court in order to enshrine a particular right into the Constitution, a trend Hunter traces back to the creation of the Charter of Rights in 1982.

"The imposition of the Charter was an Americanization," says

*See* **POLITICIANS** *page 2...*

JIM YOUNG/REUTERS

*Protesters outside the Supreme Court building in Ottawa in 1998. Many Canadians have been turning to the court for supreme answers.*

# *Two ordinary guys plan detox centre*

**Jacky Naayer**

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. – The vision that Roger Hoekstra and Uultsje De Jong have to open a detox centre in Abbotsford, B.C. is well underway. Using the acronym, LIFE (Living In Freedom Everyday), Hoekstra and De Jong plan to start the facility with only three to four beds so that they will not need a license.

Out-patient counseling, medical assistance and education for schools and businesses in the Abbotsford community will be offered as well. The focus will be on the medical welfare of the patient. A doctor will come in daily to make rounds, and will decide on how long a patient needs to stay. Patients will have to be referred by a hospital, police or other treatment centres.

## A vision for service

"If the patient decides to walk out, he can't come back. But in order for him to go through a treatment centre he would have to have a medical certificate, a signature from us to get in. He [wouldn't be able to] come back here for another month," says Hoekstra.

JACKY NAAYER

*Roger Hoekstra (l.) and Uultsje De Jong have a vision to open a detox centre in Abbotsford, B.C.*

"Originally, it started with myself when I sobered up four years ago," says Hoekstra. After much prayer, thought and education, Hoekstra felt that working with substance-abusers was something that God was calling him to do. He and De Jong started working towards their goal and, in November

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**Holistic Health**

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News

# Politicians 'wimping out' on crucial issues

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Hunter. He compares the current situation in Canada with people standing up for their rights in the U.S. For instance, he notes, "The Roe v. Wade decision [which struck down the U.S. abortion law] arose under the American Bill of Rights." Similarly, in 1988, Canada's Supreme Court struck down this country's abortion law.

Hunter argues that since the Charter came into effect Canada has ceased to be a country of parliamentary supremacy and has become a country of constitutional supremacy, like the U.S. Hunter asserts, "We're not governed by elected representatives of the people, but [by] nine unelected judges in Ottawa." Yet, he observes, Canadians seem to be content to have the Supreme Court make decisions for them.

Canada's elected governments do have a way of avoiding the effects of Supreme Court rulings related to the Charter, says Hunter. They may invoke the Charter's "notwithstanding" clause (Section 33), which allows governments to opt out of a court decision for up to three years. But Hunter says this clause has "clearly become a 'dead letter,'" which has only been used so far by the government of Quebec.

COURTESY CHRISTIAN LABOUR ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

*Ian Hunter*

Canadians "have come to conceive of liberty in individualistic terms, a view the Canadian Charter expressly embodies," Hunter wrote recently in the *National Post*. "But the claim to individual liberty very often masks harm to the collectivity... [and] often conceals selfish, sometimes perverse interests."

### Abolish the Charter

Harry Antonides, who recently retired from the Christian Labour Association of Canada and the Work Research Foundation, believes there is a problem with the Supreme Court exercising too much power, but he sees this as part of a larger problem.

"We can blame the Supreme Court for being an activist court, but it's also the fault of the legislators," he says. "The Parliamentarians are wimping out. They're acquiescing because it's the easy way out for them.... I think they're ignoring their responsibility." Antonides calls the notwithstanding clause "a weak instrument, at best.... The politicians are even too wimpy to use that."

On the issue of equal treatment for gay couples, Antonides says, "It's obvious the Supreme Court is listening to a very small minority of people who are very vocal."

COURTESY DAVID THWAITES

*David Thwaites*

Antonides sees as a "destructive trend" people going to the Supreme Court to enshrine rights. He criticizes the Charter because it assumes rights do not exist unless codified. In contrast, common law assumes rights do exist, from times past. The Charter has become a tool for the secularization of society, Antonides asserts. Because of this, he calls for the Charter to be abolished.

"The courts should interpret, not legislate," Antonides contends. "I wish people would speak up more boldly against this." Concerned Christians "should be speaking up more faithfully to our Christian confession."

### Breakdown of trust

David Koyzis, professor of political science at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont., doesn't think there's any reason to abolish the Charter. But he says that since it came into effect, Canada's courts have "power they did not have in 1982." The Supreme Court "is dealing with decisions that are extremely divisive," argues Koyzis. "Such decisions should not be made by a court" or should be "exceedingly rare."

"We're seeing the Americanization of our Constitution," says Koyzis, because Canadians are putting too much emphasis on written documents, such as our Constitution, and not enough emphasis on day-to-day relationships. For instance, "We have always understood Quebec is a distinct society. The need to entrench it in the Constitution indicates a certain breakdown of trust." Similarly, Koyzis argues that the modern tendency to go to the courts indicates "a breakdown of trust of our legislators."

But legislators are also giving up their responsibilities for making decisions about important issues such as abortion, says Koyzis. "Our elected office-holders need to take more responsibility."

Looking at the latest Supreme Court decision, which affects gay couples, Koyzis says, "Realistically, I doubt if anyone is going to invoke Section 33 [the notwithstanding clause]" to oppose it. But he believes the clause should be used more often; if it's not, there's "the danger it could become a dead letter."

Koyzis says that "we have made rights absolute." When an aggrieved group says "this is my right," that should be the starting point for a discussion, rather than the end of the argument, asserts Koyzis. "Rights claims need to be treated as rights *claims*."

### No elected court

David Thwaites, a Christian lawyer based in Orangeville, Ont., was not surprised by the Supreme Court's latest decision, which he calls "a foregone conclusion." The issue of rights of same-sex couples is "a political football," says Thwaites. "The politicians haven't been prepared to stand up and exercise some restraint.... Politicians can say, 'the court made us do it.'"

But Thwaites observes that Ralph Klein's Alberta government has "always said 'courts stay out of our face.'" If the Alberta government uses the notwithstanding clause to deal with the Supreme Court's latest decision, Thwaites says, "good for them."

One root of the current trend to enshrine rights is "a continued self-centredness" about rights in Canada, asserts Thwaites.

Unlike Koyzis, Thwaites believes difficult questions should be left to the Supreme Court to decide. "I wouldn't say they have too much power. Their mandate is there," he says. "I am not in favor of an elected Supreme Court."

In the U.S., there is a hearing process involved with the choosing of Supreme Court judges. Thwaites says this might work in Canada if the focus were on the legal abilities of judges. But if the focus were on the personal backgrounds and political bent of judges, he says "that would be unfortunate." Special interest groups could put pressure on the government to make "politically correct appointments."

To solve problems related to the Charter, "the solution is going to come from members of the public dealing with elected members of government, saying, 'The Charter needs to be recast,'" suggests Thwaites. "Christians are entitled to voice their opinions to their representatives, without self-righteousness or waving the Bible as a weapon."

# *Abbotsford men bring vision to life*

... continued from page 1

of 1998, they formed a non-profit society with a seven-member board.

Hoekstra is the executive director and De Jong is in charge of administration and development. "It started off basically with a vision that I had, and I felt God wanted me to go in that direction. We're just seeing where God is leading us," says Hoekstra.

The admonition in 1 John 3:16 is what LIFE Recovery is based on: "This is how we know what love is; Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers." De Jong and Hoekstra both attend Trinity Christian Reformed Church in Abbotsford, which in no way limits their centre. "The detox that we want to establish will be interdenominational," De Jong states. Even though LIFE Recovery may be reaching out to those who have substance abuse problems, the tenets on which it is based apply to everyone, say De Jong and Hoekstra. They believe that only Jesus Christ can give true freedom from the things that hold human beings captive.

De Jong. "I hope we get referrals from the city that we have to turn down because we're too small," says De Jong. He and Hoekstra hope that in two years the detox centre will have a license and its own building.

"I guess, ideally, we envision someday having the treatment centre, detox centre and an education facility with it, and working those three together," De Jong says.

### Expensive program

Hoekstra and DeJong thought about working with the detox idea in client's homes, where there would be 24-hour supervision. However, the geographical areas in which that approach has been successful do not have as many homeless people as Abbotsford has.

De Jong says, "The reason that detox centres have never been done in Abbotsford is because they are very expensive to run. It's like running a hospital, and the government is just not willing to put that kind of money out."

One of the biggest challenges is getting funding. Hoekstra and De Jong would actually like to stay away from government funding. "Once the government gets involved, you have to do what they say, and there go your programs," says De Jong. "Everybody thinks [the detox] is a great idea, but we need financial support. It's not that people didn't want to support us financially, but we really had nothing to show them. It's going to be an ongoing battle because of the fact that we don't want government funding, or very limited, anyway."

Hoekstra voices the same opinion, "If your budget is all geared for government funding and all of a sudden you get a new government in and they whack that part off the budget, you're stuck.

"Right now it's a dream and a vision. Once we can show people a facility and we have people coming in, it's a lot easier and Uultsje will have a lot more to promote."

The three main sources on which Hoekstra and De Jong are focusing for support are churches, businesses and the Christian Reformed diaconates in Alberta and BC.

In the midst of this funding challenge lies a deeper challenge for the church universal. "It used to be that churches took care of the social issues in society, but over the years churches have let that go to the government. It's an opportune time for the churches to take back that responsibility. The need is so great. Everybody has been touched by alcohol or drugs somehow," asserts De Jong.

*To support LIFE Recovery, or for more information, contact Roger Hoekstra or Uultsje De Jong at LIFE Recovery, P.O. Box 2652, Abbotsford , BC, V2T 6R4; or phone: 604-855-4440.*

# Christian nurses win exemption from performing abortions in Ontario

*Pro-life nurses from Markham Stouffville Hospital at the offices of the Ontario Human Rights Commission in Toronto.*

**Sue Careless**

MARKHAM, Ont. – Eight Ontario nurses, who have religious objections to abortion, recently won exemptions from assisting with the procedure. Their employer, the Markham Stouffville Hospital, granted the exemptions after a six year battle. The nurses had taken their fight to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) and one nurse had filed a civil suit.

"I want all nurses in the future to have the right to say No," said Joanne Van Halteren, one of the eight. "This is precedent setting."

The case was to be heard by the OHRC but the sides reached a mediated settlement on April 18 in which the hospital issued a policy respecting the nurses' religious objections to performing abortions. They will only be required to assist in abortions where the mother's life is in danger.

The new policy applies to all hospital, nursing and medical staff with religious objections. The OHRC asked the nurses to provide letters from their spiritual leaders to verify their religious convictions. The nurses are Baptist, Canadian Reformed, Missionary Alliance, Pentecostal and Roman Catholic.

The policy was also approved by the Ontario College of Nurses. It is hoped that in the future other health care workers would be spared the lengthy and costly battle the eight nurses endured.

### Heavy toll

The battle took its toll. One nurse died of cancer before she could sign the agreement. Others suffered stress-related illnesses. "It was very discouraging and hard on our families," admitted Van Halteren, who attends Bethel Canadian Reformed Church in Thornhill.

"When people called to say they were supporting and praying for you, it really carried you through. Many nurses weren't willing to lose their jobs. We lost people all along the way, even after filing with the OHRC. There will be nurses who didn't hang in with us who are going to benefit from our victory."

The eight nurses have paid thousands of dollars in legal expenses and lost wages. Each has 15 to 30 years of experience in obstetrics and neonatal care. "The hospital lost highly prized nurses who care about life," said Van Halteren.

During hiring, the nurses had stated their objections to performing abortions and had been told they would be accommodated. In 1994, however, after hospital restructuring, abortions were carried out next to delivery rooms. The nurses were told they would have to work it out among themselves – an unrealistic solution since nurses involved in abortions tend to resent those who aren't, say observers.

### Conscience legislation

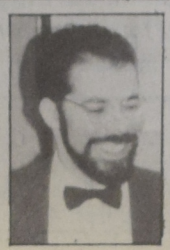
Under the new policy, the hospital, not the pro-life nurse, must find other staff willing to assist in the abortion. The Ontario College of Nurses originally told the nurses that their grievance was a matter between themselves and their employer. "If enough nurses and the community at large puts pressure on the college," Van Halteren said, "it will have to stand behind other nurses in the future."

The nurses' victory could precipitate conscience legislation that would give health care workers the legal right to refuse to perform any medical procedure they object to on religious or moral grounds. Such conscience legislation currently exists in 48 American states and many European countries.

In Ottawa, Maurice Vellacott MP (Ref.- Wanuskewin, SK) is preparing to introduce a private member's bill on conscience legislation. The courage shown by the eight Markham Stouffville nurses may give his bill a shot in the arm.

## *The path of justice doesn't run smooth*

Principalities & Powers



**David T. Koyzis**

Should Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic be tried for alleged war crimes? This is the question raised by his recent indictment by Canadian Justice Louise Arbour, acting for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

On the face of it, Justice Arbour's action would seem to strike a blow for justice by calling to account someone who has presided over numerous episodes of ethnic cleansing over the past decade. After all, one of the principles of constitutional government is that heads of state are as much subject to law as are average citizens. Furthermore, whereas an ordinary criminal is limited in his ability to inflict suffering on others, a head of state is capable of committing acts whose magnitude would leave even Jack the Ripper breathless. Consider the scores of millions killed either directly or indirectly by Stalin's and Hitler's policies.

Or think of Augusto Pinochet. He is currently under house-arrest in Great Britain awaiting a final decision as to whether he can be extradited to Spain to stand trial for crimes committed against Spanish citizens during his tenure as Chilean president between 1973 and 1990. Given his well-attested abuse of his own people, most of us would find it as difficult to sympathize with this octogenarian former dictator as with Milosevic.

### Not a simple matter

Yet bringing to justice a head of state is not a simple matter, particularly in wartime, and the attempt to do so may conflict with other objectives which are also a matter of justice. To begin with, the prosecution of war criminals is inevitably less than evenhanded. The Nuremberg trials of half a century ago convicted Nazi officials in Germany but spared Stalinist officials, and Western leaders responsible for the firebombing of Dresden. It is highly unlikely that Tony Blair or Bill Clinton will stand trial for bombing Serbian power plants and thus endangering the lives of civilians.

In the second place, and perhaps more importantly, branding a head of state a war criminal makes it difficult, if not impossible, to come to terms with him for purposes of ending a conflict and making peace. It transforms a war from a bilateral dispute at least theoretically capable of being resolved through compromise into a kind of international manhunt from which there can be no respite. One does not negotiate with a criminal; one stalks him relentlessly until he is caught. If any haggling is to be done, it can only be over the severity of the sentence.

### Hanging on for dear life

Given such a situation, it should not be surprising if Milosevic is all the more determined not to back down and to hang on for dear life – his own, that is – at the expense of the Yugoslav citizenry. Arbour's indictment makes it difficult as well for NATO leaders to consider any result short of capitulation, which will probably not be forthcoming any time soon. The likely outcome will be a lengthening of the war and its attendant suffering, with neither side able or willing to call it quits short of all out victory.

Should war criminals then be allowed to get off scot-free? Not necessarily. But recognizing the precarious nature of international law and order, it may be necessary to scale back our expectations of what they can accomplish in the real world. Even a just war is not the same as a police action, and treating it as such may lead us to overlook its ambiguities, as well as opportunities for a negotiated, if imperfect, peace.

*David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario.*

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Editorial

# God wants us to be whole and healthy

Holistic health, the theme of this issue, is something we Christians should major in. We *should*, but we *don't*. At least, not *my* generation. But things may be changing with the coming generation.

The Bible teaches wholeness, harmony and health – over and over again. Whenever the Bible speaks, it is for the healing of the nations. Jesus told his critics that the greatest command is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (he quoted Deuteronomy 6:5). In that summation of the law of Moses, Jesus captures many strands of what it is that produces wellness and wholeness. Nothing is better for our health than love, and nothing more effective for our well-being than when love flows through our whole frame and brings harmony to every expression of our being. In 1 Corinthians 6:19 we hear the Apostle Paul ask: "Do you not know that the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?" This text clearly connects body and soul.

So it should not be difficult for Christians to say with Dr. Deepak Chopra, author of *Creating Health*, that "health is the state of perfect physical, mental and social well-being. To this may be added spiritual well-being, a state in which a person feels at every moment of living a joy and zest for life, a sense of fulfilment, and an awareness of harmony with the universe around him." Apart from the universalistic overtones, which deny a personal relationship to God, this is a pretty good statement about wholeness.

### A dualistic heritage

One reason why Western Christians may not be in tune with the biblical version of shalom or well-being is that we have been shaped by both humanism and fundamentalism. Western thought, springing out of Greek philosophy, has made us think in terms of two entities: body and mind. The two seem to exist side by side without having much to do with each other. Western medicine has put this dualism into practice as it treats the body and neglects the mind and soul.

***He thought he did the paralytic a bigger favor by forgiving him his sins than by making him walk.***

Thomas Delbanco, a Boston physician, tries to escape this dualism when he says, "I hope I'm addressing both the body and the mind. But they're so intertwined that it's hard for me to differentiate. I know more about the body than the mind. It's probably the easier to study, and that's what we learned in medical school – ninety-five per cent body and five per cent mind. But I'll tell you, once you're in practice, and you're taking care of real people, it becomes much closer to fifty-fifty" (*Healing and the Mind* by Bill Moyers).

Fundamentalism has shaped us too. In the area of religion, fundamentalists focus almost exclusively on the soul, leaving the rest of life at the mercy of secular thoughts and practices. And so it's quite common for a North American Christian to be preoccupied with staying morally pure, studying the Bible and singing praises to God, while neglecting the environment, eating junk food and indulging in schlock entertainment and art.

### The good universe

There may be another reason why Christians are not always in tune with holistic thinking and acting: we confess that we were made good, but we add that sin spoiled this good creation. So what do we do: start with goodness, or with sin? If we start with sin, we probably will have a hard time reaching wholeness. If we start with goodness, we may end up denying the reality of sin and trying to save ourselves. New Age books on wellness want us to start with goodness and forget about sin. We can learn a lot from these books, but they mislead us in the spiritual realm.

Somehow, we do have to start with the good creation, but we must keep in mind the lure and destructiveness of sin as defined by God's Word, without losing sight of the power of Christ's resurrection and the hope of a new creation. We will not attain perfect health, as Chopra maintains in his book *Creating Health* (the author calls time a human creation, whereas Christians see it as God's creation, thereby accepting the reality of aging). Nor is physical health the be-all and the end-all for Christians. To lose your life in the service of Christ can also include losing your health. But that may happen only in a sacrificial sense, when love moves us to go the extra mile beyond our energies or our safety. However, we must be opposed to wrong lifestyle choices that destroy health needlessly.

### Is good health the main thing?

At the same time, we should not give in to the popular notion that the most important thing in life is to have your physical health. You hear it so often in day-to-day conversations: "Well, as long as you're healthy, that's the main thing, I always say." No, it isn't. If it were, where would sick people look for comfort seeing that they are missing out on "the main thing"? And why would we long for a renewed earth?

In keeping with our understanding of the *relative* importance of health, we should also be willing to recognize the *relative* value of a good medical system. Countries cannot or should not always look for the best medical equipment or treatment possible. That overemphasis on health comes from a secular notion that this life is all there is to be had.

When Jesus lived on this earth, he did a lot of healing. *Physical* health was a sign of the Kingdom. But *spiritual* health was uppermost in his mind. He thought he did the paralytic a bigger favor by forgiving him his sins than by making him walk (Matt. 9:1-8). To be set right with God is to be in touch with the Giver of Life and Health.

When Jesus meets the Samaritan woman, he points to himself as the continuous spring of living water which quenches all thirst once and for all. We're not even told whether his own request to the woman for a drink of well water was granted. His food and drink is to do the will of the Father (John 4). If ever we needed to be set straight on what our priorities should be, this is a good place to start.

### God promises wholeness

With all these caveats in place, we must, nevertheless, affirm the integrity of God's creation, including ourselves, and promote healthy ways of living. That means paying due attention to proper diet, helpful exercise, healthy environment, open feelings, positive attitudes, good values, strong family/community ties, joyful spirituality and a constructive cultural milieu. All of these promote good health, even though they also have value for their own sake. I am not suggesting that the environment is important only for my own health or that a cultural milieu should support only my well-being. The over-arching goal is, of course, the coming of the Kingdom of God. Even my health is subordinate to that greater purpose.

But within the realm of God's intentions for his creation we may seek health and wholeness by living out of the unity of all we are and all we experience. That, in fact, is our mandate. For the healthier we are, the greater testimony we are to the fact that God will "satisfy [our] needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen [our] frame. [We] will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail" (Isaiah 58: 11).

God loves us so much that he wants us to be whole and well. Shalom, my friends. Shalom! **BW**

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## Letters

# We still need Swagman

I am upset that some persons in the CRC Board have decided that Beth Swagman and her Abuse committee are unimportant. Her work is certainly still necessary.

There are women sitting in our churches and pews who do not function as well as they could because of past abuse. Many have yet to tell a counsellor, pastor, parent, sibling or spouse of their abuse and receive the healing that those relationships could possibly bring to them. Many have remained silent and in so doing have protected the perpetrator and therefore have added to the possibility of others being abused. Many have buried their own cries and react to others with misplaced anger and fear of rejection.

Counselling and hope from a Christian perspective is so very necessary. Some victims are almost at the point of sharing but will be silenced again without a caring female to safely confide in. Not every pastor is approachable from the victim's point of view. Never forget that it is extremely difficult to tell a male authority figure anything about abuse.

Beth's work has also educated those who have not been abused and helped them to be more understanding and supportive of victims. For many people, the church can be one of the most difficult places to be open and vulnerable. We need to continue to break the barriers to healing and continue to educate the next generation who even now may be silent victims.

Many who have been abused are still unable to receive continued counselling at the difficult milestones in their lives and in their parenting. The church must be a forerunner to providing healing and not government agencies. How overwhelming the task, how necessary the cause!

May Christ bring healing to the victims, survivors and perpetrators.

**Irma DeVries**
**Harriston, Ont.**

# The CRC needs an ongoing ministry

I have a hard time believing that two people who are in the healing ministry of my denomination, the Christian Reformed Church, are deemed unnecessary and dispensable ("CRC board wants to can Abuse Prevention Office," CC, May 31).

I wonder: are all our churches wheelchair accessible? Are all our families who are troubled by sorrow and pain due to a disability sufficiently encouraged and supported? I believe we need an ongoing ministry that will speak for those who for too long have not been recognized and fully accepted within our fellowship.

As for Beth Swagman, I think she is the best person to help abused members in our churches come forward and seek the healing they need. Let us not stop or curtail the good work she has begun! There are still too many unhealed wounds. We need Beth to make us more aware of, and better educated about, the evil of abuse.

As to Al Dreise and Peter Nicolai's statements and comments, I can only say: Amen!

**Anne DeBruyne**
**Grimsby, Ont.**

# Not the owner

I received the May 17 copy of CC today and noted that you had placed my submission on Page 8. It looks good and reads well with your editorial adjustments. Thank you for that.

I did note however that you suddenly made me the owner of Essence Publishing in Belleville, which I would not mind, but it is untrue. I am sure that Deborah Visser and her brothers feel the same way.

I own Jubilee Publications and have *one* book to sell (so far). That is *The Battle for Righteousness,* which was printed by Essence. I have paid them for the order, but that was not enough to "own the company."

The Visser family owns Essence Publications (1-800-238-6376) and I would not want to spoil my good relations with them over a mistaken identity. I hope to use them soon for another printing!

**Jack Van Meggelen**
**Toronto, Ont.**

# Says studies show Exodus' failures

I think it's fine for *Christian Courier* to provide its readership with information concerning the ex-gay group Exodus International (CC, May 3). However, in the interest of fairness I believe that CC readers should understand some of the controversies surrounding this group before they begin to encourage gay family members to become involved with them.

In the May 3 articles, the leaders of Exodus stated that "there is an increasing number of unsubstantiated claims by pro-gay leaders that 'change therapy' is ineffective and leads to self-hatred, despair and even suicide." In fact, these claims are coming from individual members of the American Psychiatric Association, from former leaders of Exodus who realized that they were deluding themselves and hurting their clients, as well as from former clients, who now refer to themselves as "Exodus Survivors."

Furthermore, psychologists Ariel Shidlo and Michael Schroeder have substantiated these claims in a two-year study of 200 people who vainly attempted to become heterosexual by way of this "therapy." They have concluded that "having been misled into thinking that being gay is a mental disorder and something that can be changed if they'll only work hard enough, many people become doubly flawed when a 'cure' eludes them."

Of greater concern to me is that Exodus is now being supported financially by several of the most anti-gay organizations in the United States, such as the Family Research Council and Focus on the Family. For years now these groups have been using Exodus International's "disease model" of homosexuality to convince the government that gays and lesbians do not deserve legal protection as a group against discrimination. They believe the place where we belong is to be lumped together with alcoholics, kleptomaniacs, schizophrenics and pedophiles.

**Don Baxter**
**Toronto**

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Editor Bert Witvoet is retiring at the end of June. We see this as a chance for some of our readers to step in and try on the editor's hat. If it fits, well ....

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Please note the ads on this page and elsewhere that list our requirements for upcoming issues. Get in touch with us if you have something to share with our readers. **We're counting on you, actually.**

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**August 9, 1999**

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# Overcoming religious prejudice

**Francis Ruiter**

***Motivated by his study of Russian history and the Russian Orthodox Church, the author visited Russia, arriving in Moscow two years before the Berlin Wall was torn down. He also visited Zagorsk, 50 miles from Moscow, where the Orthodox Church has a seminary and a museum. Becoming bored with the rhetoric of a guide in Zagorsk, the author made his escape and headed for a church where a service was is progress.*** **Editor**

I watched the service with interest but I still held a prejudicial view of the Russian Orthodox Church in which I felt were many remnants of paganism, i.e., icons, vestments and the mitre, the staff with its icon of Jesus on the crossbeam which worshippers may kiss.

As the procession of priests passed by, dressed in their splendid vestments and carrying their icon staffs, I heard a voice in my head saying, "Francis, who are you to judge where and how my spirit flows?" I felt smitten, and shaken in my shoes.

I sat down trying to unravel my thoughts. I decided to let go of my intellectual reasoning, my colored Protestant glasses and my assumptions of how God's Spirit works. It's a mystery! Later, an article I was reading, explained: "Words, sounds and pictures are equally valued and are valid means of communication in glorifying the faith."

This experience made a deep impression on my spiritual life. The song comes to my mind: "I know not how the spirit moves convincing us of sin." With this experience behind me, I attended an ecclesiastic assembly in 1998 at which syncretism (the attempted blending of irreconcilable principles) was discussed. The above story came to mind.

We who are in the Christian Reformed Church are involved with the native peoples of Canada. We wish to share with them the gospel of Jesus Christ and how it relates to our daily life and our neighbors. To share the gospel with our native brothers and sisters one has to understand their culture and spiritual past. We need to comprehend each others' cultures as a springboard for showing others how Christ's redeeming work in us can enrich their lives and ours; that it will give us comfort; that God will take care of all cultures and people who follow his precepts. In short, to love God above all and our fellow human beings as ourselves (cf. Matt. 22:34-40).

### 'Controversy falls away'

The controversy about symbols falls away and becomes irrelevant when one can place them in their historic context. I wanted some experience of this, and since we have a native healing centre in Edmonton, I invited myself to attend a prayer circle which uses the sweet grass smudge. The native elder in charge of the prayer circle welcomed me among them and invited me to participate in the prayer, which I did. It was a good experience, and a chance to testify about my faith life.

The natives use of the sweat lodge is twofold; for cleansing the body and a symbol for purification, of cleansing the soul of imperfections. The sweet grass smudge is similar to the incense used in the Catholic and Anglican churches, with whom we share the same church creeds. They are not impediments to reach out and embrace the Christian faith. When we are spirit-driven, all props, statues or mementos fall away, therefore there are no irreconcilable differences between the (white) Christian faith and our Native Canadians who want to accept the Christian faith.

Let's not use the Bible as a text book of how to worship, but as an aid to God's promises of redemption. Sometimes we forget who God is when we cram him into doctrinal boxes! I look forward to a sweat lodge experience this coming summer of 1999.

*Francis Ruiter lives in Edmonton, Alta.*

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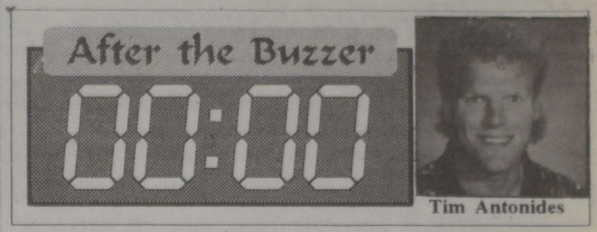



Tim Antonides

# Lights out in Pittsburgh

I can't quite figure out how it happened. The Pittsburgh Penguins had a great lineup of players, a fair bit of playoff experience, and excellent coaching. They also had a solid fan base. So why did it happen? I'm not talking about losing to the Leafs. I'm referring to the fact that the Penguins went broke.

Swimming in debt, the team filed for bankruptcy protection in October. Their two owners managed to ring up enough unpaid bills to throw everything into turmoil. Among others, they owe Mario Lemieux over $26 million. Raising arena hot dog prices just wasn't going to be enough to cut the mustard. The Penguins borrowed some cash to get through the rest of the year and hoped they could make a good playoff run.

They gave it a great shot by upsetting New Jersey in the first round and giving Toronto a good go of it in the second. They played tough, exciting hockey and didn't get too distracted by all the accountants sitting in the stands.

Now all they can do is sit back and watch a bankruptcy judge decide their fate. The organization could be restructured through a plan proposed by Mario Lemieux, or it could be sold to some yuppy, high-tech billionaire like Paul Allen and moved to a yuppy, high-tech city like Portland.

It really bugs me when things like this happen in the NHL. Team payrolls are so absurdly high and rational thought so low, nothing is safe. It was bad enough losing great teams like Quebec City and Winnipeg because their markets were too small. Now, just about any team can lose its shirt if the owners' eyes are bigger than their pocketbooks.

I wonder what it was like back in the NHL's early days when there were only a few teams and things were more simple. It must have been great to follow a team which kept its players for an extended period of time and built up a solid squad as well as a solid fan base. A player might spend 10 years or more on the same team. Relatively speaking, the salaries were on a human scale and players would commit to a team for the long haul. The hockey was great, the fans were excited and dedicated and the books were balanced.

The NHL is following the lead of baseball and basketball by becoming a league of overpaid babies and market-driven manoeuvring of teams and players from city to city. It's sad that pro sports have become such a huge business venture. Monday morning sports conversations at work should be about amazing plays and great goals, not contracts and bail-outs.

Sports in the 'modern age has ripped the soul out of athletics. It's no wonder, though. When God is removed from (what is supposed to be) a celebration of physical talent he gives us, there's nothing left to glorify except the self. The leagues continue (and will continue) to function on a steady diet of greed, hype and supply-and-demand economics.

The point of fan frustration can't be too far away, though. Dream with me for a moment and imagine this: a huge continent-wide movement starts with people refusing to attend games or watch them on TV. They hold professional sports for ransom, in effect. Their demands? Stringent salary caps. Payroll equity among small and large market teams. Monitoring of each team's finances by some sort of central agency. Lower popcorn and hotdog prices.

"And so we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." – *The Great Gatsby*

*Tim Antonides is a coach and teaches Grade 5 at Surrey Christian School Surrey, B.C.*

Film Review

# *The new Star Wars a cultural menace?*

Marian Van Til

## Star Wars I: The Phantom Menace

*Rated PG. Stars Liam Neeson, Ewan McGregor, Natalie Portman, Jake Lloyd, Ian McDiarmid. Directed by George Lucas.*

George Lucas's original *Star Wars* trilogy, the first part of which hit theatres two decades ago (1977), was a secular parable of good and evil on a grandiose scale, with plenty of religious and moral overtones despite its secular nature.

There was "The Force" – a kind of universal expiating energy which people of most faiths would be apt to associate with the cosmic power of God (the classic greeting among the good guys: "May The Force be with you"); a character who embodied the Prince of Darkness (Darth Vader), along with his minions; and Goodness as emanating from The Force, personified especially by Luke Skywalker as a young Savior-figure and his diverse, scraggly band of followers.

*As Anikin Skywalker, eight-year-old Jake Lloyd, who "recites his lines as if he's in front of an audience for the first time in his life."*

While George Lucas's company Industrial Light and Magic brought to the screen technical/visual effects never before seen and which thus wowed audiences, there was also something quite satisfying about Lucas's story-telling then. The saga made a grand fairy tale for late 20th century kids of all ages.

The three parts – *Star Wars: Episode IV: A New Hope; The Empire Strikes Back; The Return of the Jedi* – were of a piece. The three films didn't form so much a first film and two less interesting sequels as an integrated legend, which is what Lucas obviously had in mind from the start: he began his story with what he labelled "Episode IV."

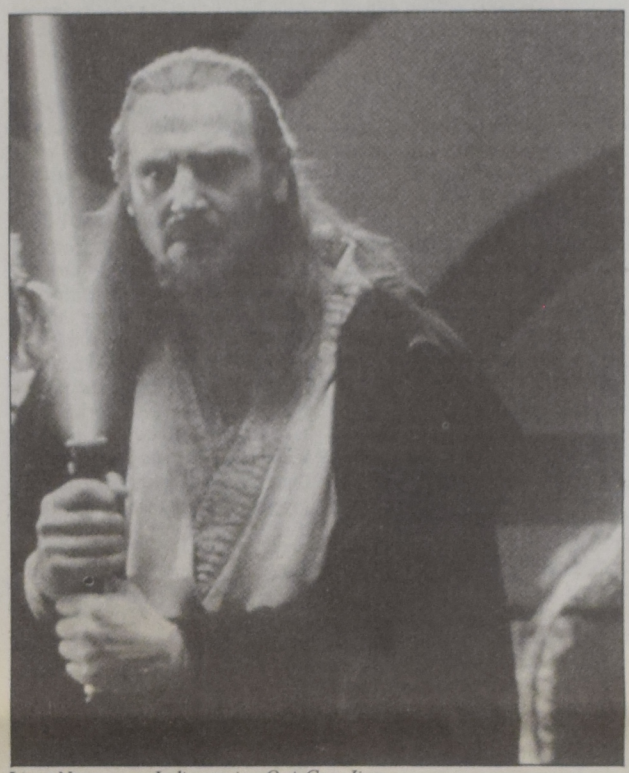
Now he has revisited the legend and given us the "history" we missed, that is: the beginning of the story (thus the current film's confusing-to-the-uninitiated appellation *Star Wars I*).

### Magic excludes the plot

This "history," however, isn't substantial. The thin story thread feels mostly like an excuse for the visual-wizardry-that-will-amaze-you which takes up a good part of this nearly two-and-a-half-hour-long film. And though some of those special effects truly are spectacular, the amazement wears off long before the various battles with sundry androids, nasty aliens and a possible Jedi-gone-bad have reached their bloodless, high-tech conclusion. The Industrial Light and Magic here doesn't seem to extend to the plot.

We already know from the trilogy that the evil Darth Vader turned out to have been Luke Skywalker's father, Anikin (and the revelation was poignant, even tragic). In the current *Star Wars* installment we're introduced to Anikin Skywalker as a child, in whom The Force is said to be unusually strong.

For those looking beyond the surface story, which George Lucas seems to invite viewers to do by boldly drawing moral points, it is not hard to see Christian allusions. The child Anikin seems to possess certain qualities of the Christ of Christianity – the Jedi "prophets" speak of him as the one who will bring balance to the cosmos; he appears, to save his people, at a kind of "fullness of time"; he was even apparently the product of some sort of immaculate conception (an odd stroke, and to many, no doubt, particularly offensive); and the child is discovered in a dusty, desert enclave caught in time, which seems suspiciously calculated to remind us of Palestine.



*Liam Neeson as Jedi warrior Qui-Gon Jinn.*

All that, however, turns out to be not so much allusion as *illusion*: we know Anikin Skywalker will, instead of saving his people from Evil, become the embodiment of evil, a Morning Star fallen from heaven – leaving us wondering what horrific thing will turn this hoped for child into a kind of Satan. (The only hint we get is that there is great fear in this child – we're not sure why – and that fear can cause anger, anger hatred, and hatred suffering.)

### Good actors wasted

It's quite likely that this will pass by most young viewers, and perhaps that's for the best. But even as pure entertainment, this film has its drawbacks. Besides the young Anikin Skywalker, we're introduced to the wise Jedi knight Obi-Wan Kenobi in his apprentice days, to a much younger (Force master and Jedi teacher) Yoda, to a not-quite-finished android C-3PO, and to the winsome canister of bolts who can fix *anything*, R2-D2. But it is a new character, Obi-Wan's mentor Qui-Gon Jinn (Liam Neeson), who emerges at the centre of things. Because of Neeson's skill as an actor, Qui-Gon is the only one we care about much (though our care is thwarted); but even Neeson can't do enough with this under-developed part.

There are several other good actors here with even less to do (Ewan McGregor as the young Obi-Wan Kenobi, Ian McDiarmid as a senator – both from the U.K., as is Neeson); and some bad actors with too much to do, most notably eight-year-old Jake Lloyd, who recites (emphasis on recites) his lines as if he's in the local church Christmas pageant in front of an audience for the first time in his life.

### Secular icons

There's one more observation which must be made. Audiences are being drawn to this film by the millions. And, in fact, many, especially those who saw the original trilogy as children or teenagers, are taking it quite seriously. To them it's considerably more than entertainment.

It's no exaggeration to suggest that there's a phenomenon at work here which has a spiritual dimension and has created (or, more accurately, is maintaining) a *Star Wars* subculture. *Star Wars* as pseudo-religion comes complete with a moral saga (the revelation), worship objects (merchandise acting as character/hardware icons), repeated communal rituals (the viewing and re-viewing, oft-times repeated, of the film experience with friends/family), and an excited verbal sharing of the story and one's experience with it (evangelizing one's neighbors).

This time around, Lucas appears to have become a kind of Judas. He has sold out. He trades on viewers' previous affections for the ongoing characters while shifting the boundaries of the moral battle and upstaging the characters with hardware and fire power.

Though it's true that some people "love" their computers, or cars, or even their golf clubs, it's hard to be moved by a film that invites you to love its hardware instead of its characters and what you thought they stood for. Not much of a religion, in the long run.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Church

# Dutch Protestants ripe for confessional?

**Translated from the Dutch by Bert Witvoet**

AMSTERDAM (Trouw) – Protestant churches in the Netherlands seem ready to embrace the practice of voluntary confession. Proponents from both the left and right are favorably inclined, even though they may differ in emphasis.

"If you think about spiritual healthcare, it's worth considering it," says a Reformed (*Hervormd*) pastor, R. van den Beld, from Bilthoven. But he's of the opinion that guilt and forgiveness should be expressed in the faith *community*. Otherwise, he says, going to the confessional is just an expression of the individualism that also penetrates faith life.

Rev. Nico ter Linden from Amsterdam regularly experiences people walking into the Westerkerk (West Church) to ask if they can make a confession. "They want to get rid of their story; their suitcases are too heavy," he says. Ter Linden is sympathetically inclined toward confession, but doesn't want to focus too much on guilt and forgiveness. "People come with all kinds of feelings – of guilt, but also of emptiness, anger or gratitude."

### No quick forgiveness

Rev. H.J. Hegger, both a pastor emeritus and former Roman Catholic priest, feels no personal need to go to confession, but he acknowledges the possibly wholesome effect of an individual confession. But he is more in favor of communal penitence through which people, before God and his people in church, can be reconciled to each other and God.

Hegger dislikes every form of compulsion, he says, and resists the idea of pronouncing absolution. "Forgiveness belongs to God." Hegger's experience of confession from the time when he was a Catholic was "terrible." Because confession was required, there were often long lines in front of the confessional. "We felt like absolution machines," he says bluntly.

Rev. Ruud Foppen, a prison minister in Limburg, does nothing but hear confessions, but he is reluctant to quickly extend forgiveness after those stories. Forgiving can only be done by the victims, he says. If a victim is not able to extend forgiveness, Foppen prefers to end the discussion with a perpetrator by praying rather than forgiving. "You have to go through the guilt," he says. "It's not a light thing."

Rev. A.M. van den Berg from Groot-Ammers would agree. "Quickly extend forgiveness?" he says. "That's not right." But he acknowledges that Calvin and the old writers of the more "recent Reformation" were not against confession.

Van den Berg wants nothing to do with a confession "hype" which plays into a "confession culture" in society. It has to do with a more serious business, he says: sin and guilt before God.

Rev. B.H. Weegink, Reformed pastor from Katwijk, wants to first thoroughly examine the Reformed roots of sin and forgiveness. "I think we will come a long way then with preaching and the totality of the worship service."

In her Maastricht years, Rev. F.W. Oosterwijk was sometimes jealous of what seemed to her to be the carefree nature of the Catholic faith. "You confess your sins, and you go on." But now she is convinced that a good pastoral encounter will contain elements of confession, and that "in certain cases one can even extend a blessing or forgiveness."

## Entire Bible read, marathon style, in Washington

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Religion Today) — The entire Bible was read on the west steps of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. beginning at 8 a.m. on May 3 with Genesis 1:1. Reading the entire Bible out loud took about 80 hours.

Readings occurred in more than 70 languages, including the 22nd chapter of Revelation in 20 languages. People of various ages and races participated and the public was invited to listen.

This is the 10th consecutive year the Bible Reading Marathon was held. The first took place on the Mount of Olives in Israel on Jan. 1, 1990. That led to hundreds of Marathons held annually in more than 50 countries. About 1,000 are held annually in the United States. The Washington, D.C., marathon was part of the National Day of Prayer.

The marathons are organized by the International Bible Reading Association. The public reading of God's Word "has made a big change in a lot of people's lives," co-ordinator Barbara Bivens told Religion Today. "People come by and say they could not believe the Bible is being read in public, especially at the nation's Capitol."

## *Reform Jews reform*

PITTSBURGH, Pa. (EP) — Leaders of Reform Judaism, America's largest and most liberal branch of Judaism, approved a major revision of lifestyle guidelines for American Jews May 26. By a vote of 324-68 the rabbis endorsed a return to such traditional practices as praying in Hebrew, wearing yarmulkes, and keeping kosher. Reform leaders said many Reform Jews have already returned to such observances, and the new guidelines will only reinforce the existing trend.

Rabbi Paul Menitoff, executive vice president of the 1,700-member Central Conference of American Rabbis, said that having a set of principles that clearly define Reform Judaism is important "when so many individuals are striving for religious meaning, moral purpose and a sense of community."

## *School projects violated religious rights, says U.S. court*

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. (EP) — A U.S. federal judge ruled May 21 that a school district violated the religious rights of three Catholic families by requiring children to cut out elephant-head images of a Hindu god, build "worry dolls" from toothpicks, and construct an altar for an Earth Day service.

U.S. District Judge Charles Brieant ordered the Bedford Central school district to stop requiring student participation in activities with a religious component, and told the district to give clear instructions to teachers concerning federal standards for separation of church and state.

Brieant rejected family complaints about other school practices, including yoga lessons and the use of the occult-themed "Magic: The Gathering" card game. However, the judge said he found a "subtle coercive pressure to engage in the Hindu religion" during third-grade lessons on India, and called some of the school's Earth Day activities "truly bizarre."


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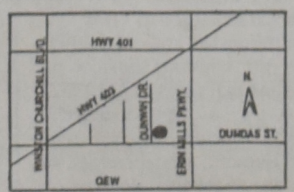


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## Baptism should occur only once

SANTIAGO, Chile (EP) — Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox leaders in Chile signed an historic agreement recognizing baptisms performed in one another's churches. Each church will honor all water baptisms performed by the others. The agreement recommends that a common format for baptism be established. The document was created by 10 theologians who worked for two years on the project.

Church

# *New worship forms needed for a new world: worship conference*

**Jessie Schut**

SHERWOOD PARK, Alta. — Traditionally, Protestant worship services have been places for believers to gather together and hear the Word of God proclaimed.

But the "worship evangelism" movement believes that worship services are an important point of contact for unbelievers. Therefore, every detail of the service should be planned with an unbeliever in mind. "Churchy" language, traditional hymns, doctrinal sermons and other familiar trappings of church culture may be discarded – and should be, says this movement — in favor of plain English, contemporary beats, "seeker-sensitive" sermons, live dramas and coffee in the foyer before church. The dichotomy between traditional practices and this new way is a major source of conflict within congregations.

Sally Morgenthaler, author of *Worship Evangelism*, says worship must change because the way we worship ministers to a world that no longer exists, a world of predictability, stability and order.

### The world has changed

Morgenthaler was recently in Sherwood Park, Alberta, as part of a worship conference sponsored by New Creation Ministries. She painted a picture of another world, one inhabited by a generation that is invisible to the church, those born between 1965 and 1980, also known as the GenXers.

They're also known as the 5-D Generation because their realities are Divorce, Daycare, Digitalization, Debt and Downsizing. Forty-five per cent have seen their parents' marriages ended in divorce, and very likely, both parents worked outside the home. They grew up with computers, credit-card spending and the fact that they may not be able to find a job after they've spent a bundle on getting a good education.

There would be one-third more of these young people if they hadn't been aborted. Nearly one quarter of them seek counselling for psychological problems. Suicide rates have quadrupled, and three million teens in America have sexually transmitted diseases.

### 'More confession than in the church'

You don't need to convince them that God exists — they think he does, and they'd like to experience him. You don't have to convince them about sin — they can see the mess the world's in with war, environmental destruction, drugs and the arms trade. They're on an intense search for the spiritual, but they aren't interested in religion. Seventy per cent of them say that they'd like to come to church if they actually could experience God there.

How does the church minister to them? It seems as though pop culture has a better handle on where they're at than the church does. TV shows such as *The X-Files* and movies centre on the supernatural. Chat rooms on the Internet allow them to ask questions anonymously. Coffee bars stay open 24 hours a day so they have a place to find "community." Thousands of lyrics in popular music have the words sin or forgiveness in them. "There's more confession there than I hear in the church," says Morgenthaler.

In fact, the church has done a pretty good job of either ignoring this group, or even outright condemning their confused lifestyle. "They're the most pathetic group of people ever created," she quotes Pat Robertson as saying.

### There is truth

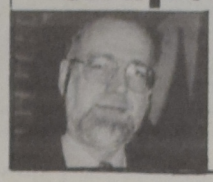
Yet these are people, like all others, who were created by God to have a relationship with him. "The truth is out there, Scully," says Agent Mulder on *The X-Files*, and this invisible generation wants to know it. They're intuitive, cynical, and they dare to question our reality.

The gospel does hold the answer to their questions. The church is challenged to show them God in a way that's real. It needs to affirm their perception that the world's broken, and show that Jesus came to fix the mess we're in. And the church can offer community as an antidote to alienation and loneliness. But it may have to drop some of its cherished traditions and church culture to do it, and reach out in new ways, asserts Morgenthaler.

"It's a messy business, ministering to this group of people," says Morgenthaler. "There are no models, and 'church by cloning' is history." We may be as reluctant as Jonah if God sends us on this mission. But eventually Jonah did change his tune and was obedient. "God is still waiting for a host of Jonahs to do his bidding," she says.

# Body, soul and spirit

## Chapter & Verse



• Al Wolters
Mary S. Hulst Antonides

*"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1 Thess 5:23, NIV).

This verse has sometimes been used by Christian thinkers as evidence for what is sometimes called "anthropological trichotomy," the view that the human person is composed of three distinct parts: body, soul and spirit, and that each of those parts has its own functions. In this view, the body has to do with our physical and biological functioning, the soul with our emotional functioning, and the spirit with our spiritual functioning. A prominent exponent of this viewpoint is the popular Chinese Christian writer Watchman Nee.

Although it is true that it is perfectly appropriate to distinguish different levels of human functioning, I do not believe that this kind of trichotomy is biblical. The Bible does not use these anthropological terms in the way we tend to use them, and is not concerned with giving a systematic analysis of the components of human nature. For example, the word usually translated "soul" in the Bible very often refers to the whole person, just as we in English can say that "there wasn't a soul there," and mean simply that no one was present.

When we read in the King James Version, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers," this simply means, as the NIV has it, that "everyone," should respect political authority. In fact, in the Old Testament the word for "soul" (Hebrew *nephesh*) is even used for a lifeless corpse (e.g., Lev. 22:4).

The word for "body" has a similarly wide usage in the Bible. In Romans 12:1 (one chapter before our earlier example), the Apostle exhorts Christians to "present your bodies a living sacrifice" (KJV), but there again, the reference is to the whole person. The New English Bible correctly translates this verse: "To offer your very selves to him."

The Apostle uses both "soul" and "body" to refer to a whole human being. We could make similar comments about the way the Apostle Paul uses "spirit" and "flesh," for example in Galatians 5. Both spirit and flesh lay claim to the whole range of human functioning.

This is not to say that these anthropological terms are not sometimes used in a narrower sense in the Bible; they are. But the point is that they are used in an unsystematic way, and in a way that often does not correspond to our traditional associations.

### Singular function

But what about the verse we quoted above? Does that not show that the Bible, at least sometimes, categorizes human beings into three component parts? I do not believe it does. For one thing, we need to realize that the verb translated "may... be" in the second sentence is *singular* in the Greek, not plural. It's as though the Apostle were saying, "I want you to realize that your body/soul/spirit *is* to be sanctified." In other words, "body, soul and spirit" functions as one entity in the sentence.

We also need to be aware of the idiomatic use of language. If I were to say that I sold my business "lock, stock, and barrel," I would not mean that my business consisted of precisely those three items. In my view, the Apostle is using "body, soul and spirit" in this verse in a similar way. His prayer is that the totality of the Thessalonians' lives – their thoughts, their passions, their sexuality, you name it – will be sanctified on the last day. Whatever goes into the makeup of human beings, no matter how we precisely define or discriminate those components, *that* is to be sanctified.

*Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario. He has committed himself, hook, line and sinker, to Jesus Christ.*

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# Campus Culture

Peter Schuurman

## *Joseph and the Whale*

There has been much discussion in the academy over the merits of the "Western canon" – the body of "great books" that have been the staple of classical education through the centuries. There is a concern, and quite right in my opinion, that literature from people on the margins – Africans, women and the lower classes, for example – has been systematically overlooked.

On the other hand, when you talk with students today, it's shocking how little they know about that book that has been a foundation and inspiration for the Western canon: the Holy Bible. Let me give you three examples.

I had one student come into my office looking for a Bible. I secretly hoped he was a "seeker" and wanted to draw closer to his Creator. But he told me he was taking a course on Milton and he couldn't understand all the allusions in the literature, so he needed the "background reading."

Another student was told by his professor that the book of Job was a fascinating book for its perspective on science and human knowledge. In talking with him, I noticed he had some other "deep interests," and I recommended the Song of Songs to him as well.

Finally, while at a student dinner I got in conversation with a drama student. He was open to discussing matters of faith, so I asked him some pointed questions. Unfortunately, we didn't get very deep. "I went to a Bible study for awhile," he said, "because I needed to work on the 'preacher' character I often use when doing 'improv.' Now I can use real Bible stories when I act – like Joseph and the whale."

**This is indicative of the spiritual climate** of university campuses today. Christianity no longer has a privileged position, as it once did. One cannot take biblical literacy for granted. People seem to know more about the scandalous actions of priests today than they do about David, Bathsheba, and Psalm 51. It has come to the point where we hold a "Christianity Awareness Week" every year in one of the main hallways on campus, hoping to push back the tide of religious ignorance. There is obviously too much cultural residue of the Christian faith still lingering for it to be completely ignored in the university. But this change in status I'm talking about allows a unique opportunity for reform – to tell people the old, old story in a fresh way. We can gain much from the rebuke of our critics, as well as invite others – especially those who may have been left out in the past – to lead us in speaking and living the gospel into the next millennium. Besides, I'd argue that Christian faith remains most faithful to its author and perfecter when it lays aside its privilege and seeks creative service instead.

*Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed campus minister at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ont.*

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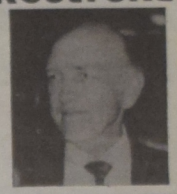
# Eating non-food

## COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE



I add condiments to my meat. But what about what might already have been added even while the animal was still alive? Milk, fruits, vegetables and grains, too, may all have been "enhanced" in some way.

Recently I received from a cousin in Minnesota an audiotape which contained a presentation by a British farmer on the use of organo-phosphates on animals in Britain. There was a time when farmers there were required by law to treat their animals annually with an organo-phosphate, a systemic treatment for parasites. A systemic compound moves throughout the body after being absorbed into the blood through the skin.

Farmers applying the pesticide were given strict handling instructions, including the wearing of protective clothing. However, the work was strenuous, especially with sheep, which were required to be completely submerged. The farmer, hot and sweating, might doff some of his or her protective clothing. These people became sick, and some died. Eventually the government quietly withdrew the treatment requirement.

The use of organo-phosphates is under suspicion of connection with the incidence of mad cow disease, (Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans). As far as I know, the link has not been laboratory-tested. But popular suspicion by people in the field making observations is a good indicator that all is not well with the widespread use of improperly tested pesticides such as organo-phosphates.

I listened to my cousin's tape with some skepticism. She has for years been interested in nutrition and alternative medicine, as am I, but it is as possible to be duped by the "experts" there as well as elsewhere. But when comparing notes with a dairy-farmer neighbor and a retired doctor from South Africa, I was astonished to learn they, too, were well aware of the possibility of disease from the use of organo-phosphates.

### You can die from that!

The South African doctor told me of other suspicious products. There is, for instance, a hormone treatment of pineapples used to cause them all to mature at the same time for harvest. He has treated workers sick from handling the product, and has seen some die!

I was surprised to see on a carton in which grapefruit was shipped, that the fruit was treated with thiabendazole, a common de-wormer for livestock. This pesticide acts on grapefruit as a systemic, so it is incorporated into all of the tissue. No amount of washing will remove it.

A few years ago the executive director of an American potato growers organization cautioned its members to be more sensitive to public concern over the use of chemicals in farming. He reminded them that of all crops grown in the U.S.A. potatoes are subject to the most chemical treatment: of the seed, the plant, the ground and in storage.

### 23,000 chemicals, results not known

Recently the European Union banned the import of Canadian beef because of the routine use of hormones in animals to promote growth. The fear is (and here again, I'm not sure if significant studies have been done) that traces of hormone in the meat or meat by-products have been a significant factor in the increasingly early onset of puberty in humans.

There may be insidious culprits incorporated in virtually every mass-produced product we consume. Technology is being used to soften many of the costs and inconveniences resulting from Adam's fall into sin. There may be nothing wrong with that but going for the quick, convenient and sensational too readily panders to our weakness. According to Canada's environment commissioner, as reported by the *Edmonton Journal* on May 27, there are now over 23,000 chemicals used in Canada, and their potential toxicity is a growing concern.

Many of the compounds have not been tested for safety; in fact, there is a category of chemicals which may never be tested only because they have been in use since before protective legislation was brought in.

### A less than healthful approach

Unfortunately, Health Canada, the supposed government watchdog on behalf of us who are Canadians, has been implicated more than once recently in a cover-up of poorly-tested or suspect compounds. Health Canada is notorious for refusing to release test results, even to a Senate investigation committee looking into possible collusion between Health Canada officials and the manufacturers of a hormone for stimulating milk production. Complicating everything is the reduction by government of both scientific staff and the monitoring of contamination.

Fortunately, knowledgeable people, including government employees, are speaking out about abuses and dangers of public decisions past or pending. We should, however, all take responsibility for what we put in our mouths.

So, pass the seasoning, marinade, and even the sugar, but I'll pass on everything else. Give me food as close to the original as possible, and I will provide my own "additives," thank you.

*Vern Gleddie owns and operates a sheep ranch outside of Edmonton, Alberta.*

# It takes time to integrate the self

MOTHER AND CHILD BY MARY CASSATT — 1889

*"She will feel better about herself, and perhaps have some energy to define herself more clearly in her relationship with her children."*

**Deborah De Jong**

Health is something that many people seek, and when we talk about health, many times we refer solely to a person's physical state of well-being. But in the past few decades, the definition of health has been broadening to include much more than just what goes on with our bodies, and a new term has been coined to describe this greater breadth: holistic health.

Holistic health refers to the health of the whole person – not just the body – since we exist on many levels besides the physical. Keeping it to the basics, each person has at least a spiritual component, an emotional component, and psychological, intellectual and sexual components in addition to the physical.

But there's one more step involved in achieving holistic health, aside from simply recognizing that these parts of a person exist, and that is an integration of all these components.

## Pulled in all directions

Let's start by looking at a non-integrated person. First of all, this person is under stress. Maybe she believes that she should be spending more time with her mother who is in an old-age home, but she has also over-committed herself to various volunteer activities through her church and she wants to do what is right for everyone (intellectual). Perhaps she has a distant relationship with her husband, and has had for the past few decades. She might feel like he doesn't really know her, or appreciate her for who she is (emotional/psychological /sexual). At the same time, maybe she thinks she has been a bad mother because her teen-aged son has started hanging around with a rough crowd, and neither her son nor her older daughter are interested in attending church any more – and there may be times, becoming more frequent, when she herself doesn't feel very connected to God (emotional/spiritual).

This person has lots of things going on in her life that are preventing her from being at peace. She's being pulled in a number of different directions, and because she doesn't have a sense of overall priorities for herself, she doesn't know how to start dealing with any of her stressors. She feels a heavy burden of guilt.

## Centring the self

Holistic health has at its root a basis of self-care or self-love. An integrated person has asked herself: what are the things in my life that are of the highest importance to me? What do I really believe is true about me and about the world? On the basis of her answers (which are not necessarily easy to determine!) she begins to arrange her life differently.

One of the things the person in the above example may discover, is that *she* is important to herself! And that for her own well-being, it is crucial that she take adequate time to be with God, and to be with herself, every day. So she vows to discipline herself in this fashion. She may begin to read the Bible again, or more carefully, and books on spirituality, to talk to people about her understandings, and even change some of the things she believes. She is beginning to address her spiritual needs. After a time she will begin to mature and grow in this area.

## Strength to choose

In the meantime, because she is addressing the need that she believed was foremost in her life (spirituality), she will feel better about herself, and perhaps have some energy to define herself more clearly in her relationship with her children. She may choose to seek counseling to help her separate herself from them – not in order to care for them less, but in order to recognize that her children are their own persons, and need the space to make their own choices.

Her worrying or feeling guilty about who they are is not, in the end, at all useful for them, or for her. But there are ways that she can learn to feel about them, and behave towards them, that are very confident and loving, and that don't interfere with their lives in a dysfunctional way, or cause her to feel as though she is at fault for who they are and who they choose to become (emotional/psychological).

Something that may arise in the process of her counseling is her own childhood. Integration of the self very legitimately includes an understanding and acceptance of ourselves in the different stages of our own growth, and is not in any way exclusively about who we are in our present state of being. In fact, the deepest levels of integration and holistic health will almost have to include an exploration, or at least a revisiting and acceptance, of some of the childhood events that have made a significant impact on who we are today.

## Growth of self-knowledge

Eventually, what begins to happen to a person who, knowingly or unknowingly, begins to take a closer look at who she is, and to make some choices about how she will live, rather than letting life happen to her or believing that she is a victim of its vagaries, is that she will get to know herself better. She will come to terms with herself, accept her limitations, enjoy her strengths and have more energy with which to participate in the world around her.

She will become more whole. She will begin to understand that the peace that passes understanding is within her grasp as a persistent seeker of God, and that the contentment he offers is not something that can be achieved only by the intellect on its own, but that this contentment is a result of the self working in harmony with itself.

In the same way that the community we seek within our church congregations requires discipline and intentionality, so does the "community" we seek within ourselves.

## It takes time

Being a whole, healthy Christian is not something that will simply fall into our laps. How could we believe this if we consider how complex and intricate we are as the very image of God? Holistic health cannot be achieved in short order, nor is it a goal to be undertaken lightly. It requires ongoing effort, patience, an openness to seeing in a new way, and certainly it requires an openness to *being* in a new way.

Change of any kind is threatening to most people, and change that alters our interior landscape is particularly scary: it affects our relationship with God, with ourselves, and with significant people in our lives.

However, there is no greater gift we can give ourselves than an opportunity to get closer to the way we were intended to live – in peace within ourselves and in a closer walk with our God and his creation.

*Deborah De Jong is a teacher on maternity leave. She lives in Langley, B.C., with her husband and two children.*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# Was music created to re-create us?

**John Tissot**

Tamra Diel, age seven, was the victim of an automobile accident and lay comatose in a hospital. Her family asked that singing star LeAnn Rimes, the girl's favorite, go to Tamra's bedside and sing. Rimes agreed. Tamra regained consciousness, but she didn't remember that visit.

What happened here? Did the music revive the girl, or did something else occur?

Researchers in English hospitals have conducted tests on comatose patients, which have shown that human beings are more than mechanical bodies. Music therapists were sent to work with patients in comas. The therapists improvised wordless singing to match the rhythm of the patients' pulse and breathing patterns.

Before going into a hospital room the therapist would meet with a patient's family to learn something about the patient. While the therapist worked with a comatose person, hospital staff were asked not to interfere, nor were they to carry out "invasive procedures" for 10 minutes after the session was over.

The patients reacted to the music in various ways. Some began slower and deeper breathing patterns. Some made grabbing movements of the hands or turned their head. Some opened their eyes, and some even regained consciousness.

Did the music heal or did something else occur? We can understand memory, reasoning power and the rest. But music?

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*Does music itself heal, or is it an instrument by which God heals?*

## God created music

Music has existed in the universe since the time of creation. In Job 38:7, the Lord questioned Job about the "time when the morning stars sang together." We see that music and creation went hand in hand. If music accompanied creation, can't it be present for re-creation, for healing?

Luke 2 tells about the angel announcing to the shepherds the impending birth of Jesus: "All at once there was with the angel a great company of heavenly host, singing the praises of God." Jesus came to earth to heal humankind, and his arrival came with music.

Does music itself heal, or is it an instrument by which God heals? Scripture gives instances of objects seeming to performing miracles, but those objects get their power directly from God. Moses' staff, for example.

In music God has given us a powerful gift. Can it be that by producing music we open ourselves and others to the power of God's healing? The Levites came to King Solomon's court "with their musical instruments for the Lord's service" (2 Chronicles 7:6). As the Levites played and sang, were they experiencing a kind of healing of themselves and those who listened?

Today, parents are again asking if they should have their children take music lessons, piano or other instruments, privately or in classes.

## Music develops the mind, effects the heart

Paul Griffiths writes a music column for the *New York Times*. He finds practicality here. "Music teaches the ability to listen, which is fundamental to education. And all the evidence suggests that listening to music and performing music helps a child in acquiring other skills."

Griffiths continues, "Music seems to hook into parts of the brain that have to do with mathematical and language abilities. On a more practical level, a child involved in a musical performance is confronted with challenges that will be of lifelong benefit: how you present yourself in public, how you argue a case, how you interpret a document, what evidence you accept and what you question, where you draw the limit between what you are told and what you want, how you work with others toward a common goal."

In the process he describes, isn't the child being re-created in a certain sense?

David Amram has written music for the theatre and for films, including music for the *Manchurian Candidate*. He is composer-in-residence with the New York Philharmonic. He says, "Music *is* healing. Music, made with purity of intent, filters through the creator to the heart, mind and soul of the listeners whose psychic response helps to heal the players of the music in return.

"Children should be *encouraged* to study music, and if they'd rather do something else, they should be exposed to beautiful music of all kinds."

## Giving back the love

My parents bought a piano for my music lessons at the end of the Great Depression. I don't know what sacrifices they made for me. Many years later my father died. About five years after that my mother's health deteriorated to the point that we three children had to send her to a convalescent hospital to get more care than we could give her. We chose the best we could find and afford. It happened to be near where my sister lived, but more than 500 miles from my home. I wrote to my mother often, but I could only visit her a couple of times a year.

After I stopped taking piano lessons, I continued to practise; but lacking real talent, there was an upper limit to my accomplishments. Upon learning that there was a piano in the hospital where my mother was confined, I practised until I could play several pieces decently. Then, when I and my family went to see her, I played for her.

Did my music "heal" her? Did it extend her life? I don't know, but I'm glad I could give back some of the love she had given me. I believe David Amram is correct when he says music heals. Music is often present when God's power heals. A powerful gift indeed.

*John Tissot lives in Carpinteria, Cal.*


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# Dear Sarah

## A letter to a sister who's hurting

*Curt Gesch, a teacher at Bulkley Valley Christian High School in Smithers, B.C., asked his class to write a letter to a fictional (or real, if appropriate) sister, brother, relative or friend who is suffering from an eating disorder. The letter needed to include the following parts:*

*- a description of the person's activities which lead you to believe that he or she has an eating disorder (signs);*

*- a description of the possible medical consequences (physical problems);*

*- a description of the possible social consequences (relationship problems);*

*- recognition of why the person might have the eating disorder (root causes);*

*- where he or she can go for help (be sure to let the person know that you will be there for him or her).*

*Gesch sent us one of the letters written by a girl who has been a Christian for only about two years. We are happy to publish it in this issue on holistic health.* **Editor**

### Dear Sarah,

Hi! How has your day been? Mine was alright. School's been kind of a drag lately, though. Yesterday, for example, I had three tests in one day. It was horrible.

You know, Sarah, I'm concerned about you. You're my sister and I love you dearly, but there has been a lot of friction between us lately. I'm afraid I know the reason why. I might as well be straightforward. I'm concerned that you might have anorexia nervosa.

Here are my reasons for believing this: You're always counting your calories; you're continuously weighing yourself; and you barely ever eat. You seem to be always making up excuses not to eat. Many times I have seen you slipping your food to the dog when you think no one is looking. You're getting skinnier and skinnier. Plus, you've started wearing baggy clothes. And everything has to be perfect. You also are always exercising, and I've heard you say how fat you think you are, while you're really underweight.

I don't know if you even realize what could start happening to your body because you're not eating. You could lose your beautiful hair, and your thinking could become confused. I've already heard you complaining about how cold you've been lately, which is because your body had lost its ability to control temperature — you don't have any fat to keep you warm anymore. Plus, you could grow lanugo hair (a fine white hair your body produces when there's no fat to keep your body warm).

I've seen how dry your skin has become; that's also because you're not eating. And there's a possibility you'll stop menstruating. I know how much you want to have children when you're older. If you continue abusing your body, there's a possibility you'll never be able to. You could even die from this disease: 15-23 per cent of anorexics do die, most often from cardiac arrest.

UNESCO

**Sarah, to be honest,** I can already see how not eating has changed your attitude. You're hardly ever the happy, bubbly person you used to be. You don't want to spend time with other people nearly as much. You are also moody a lot of the time, very irritable and sensitive to criticism. You also seem to become depressed easily. All your time is taken up obsessing over your weight.

I believe I know what led to you getting this eating disorder. Back when you were overweight I realize it must have been very hard on you to be called names by those rude kids at school. And I know our Grandma is not the most considerate person in the family, calling you "Chubby Cheeks" in front of everyone. I don't think anyone realized just how much those comments hurt you. It's just that you have a more sensitive personality than anyone else in our family.

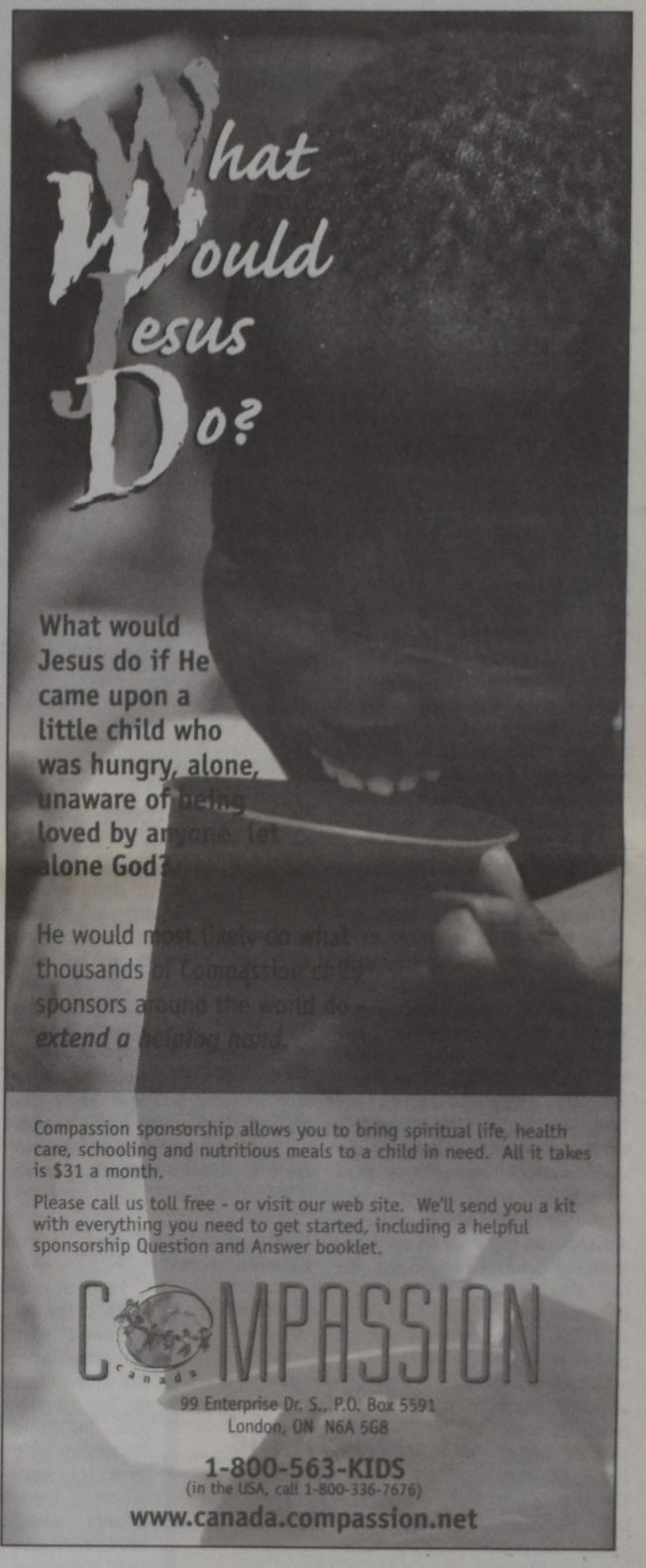
**You can put that all behind you,** with God's help. Remember that verse in 1 Corinthians 3:16 that says we are God's temple and that God's spirit lives in us? Well, what that verse means is that God made our bodies, and since he sees them as beautiful, we should too. Which means we should be careful to look after our bodies. Another verse I thought of is from 1 Samuel 16:7(b): People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

What is really important is where your heart is, not what your body looks like. Trying to achieve some control in your life by not eating is hurting you rather than helping you. This is the only body we're going to get. If we ruin this one we can't stand in line and get another one.

The bottom line is: I love you just the way you are, and so does God. God will be here for you, no matter what, and will help you through this. Remember, he promised that he would never leave us, nor forsake us.

I'm willing to go to the hospital with you anytime if you'd like to talk to a doctor about this. Whatever you decide, I'll be here for you. And I'm praying for you.

*Love,*
*Freya*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# Attracted to wholeness

Diane Klein

Imagine the pieces of a dismantled bicycle lying on the picnic table in your backyard. You rifle through them, but apart from the water bottle, you don't find anything you can really use. Unless, of course, you are interested in having a bicycle to ride. *Now* these parts make some sense. And should you go ahead and assemble the bike, you could have – perhaps, if you chose – transportation, enjoyment, exercise or employment, using your bicycle.

The *whole* is worth much, much more to you than the pile of *parts*. Because once those pieces are arranged so that they can work together, something far greater than the sum of the parts emerges.

I don't know about you, but there was a time in *my* life when I felt like a pile of parts on a picnic table. Times when my theology told me there was something of value lying there but when the voice inside me said they were useless scraps. I probably didn't look like a bunch of bicycle pieces; in fact, pictures of me look quite human. But I imagined myself as a lively and energetic intellect saddled with two unwieldy extra parts. One of them was a body, which I dragged along like an old wagon with bumpy wheels, making noise and attracting unwanted attention. The other was a pale blue helium-filled balloon trying to escape to its celestial home – my poor soul, tied to my wrist with a stout cord, longing to be away.

You suspect I am going to draw an analogy here. Indeed I am. When we assemble a bicycle, we see that the parts give each other meaning and effectiveness. We call this phenomenon "synergy." The philosophy that a human being is much, much more than the sum of his or her parts – and that these parts can be integrated and balanced, and then produce harmony and health – is called "holism."

*Like parts of a bicycle, the body, mind and soul are worth more together than separately.*

As a Reformed Christian, I am attracted to this idea of "wholeness." I confess that Christ's shed blood has made me whole. I acknowledge God's sovereignty in all aspects of my life. I look forward to the resurrection of my body. And I long for a higher level of spiritual existence, a life closer to our Creator. Here at *Christian Courier* we believe that Reformed Christians with a refreshed image of their personal wholeness can, in turn, be living examples of health to a seeking and spiritually depressed world. This is the reason we have chosen a special focus on Holistic Health for this issue of CC.

**God loves me just the way I am.**

### Body, mind and soul – a human 'trinity'

Pardon me while I borrow an image from our theology, that of the Trinity. For the purpose of this discussion, let's think of ourselves as three distinct parts: body, mind and soul. Three distinct parts that are really one – one whole self. The theory of holism maintains that an integrated self, one whose parts are balanced and in solid communication with each other, is a healthy self. This kind of health, though, is not defined simply by the absence of disease, but by a pro-active state of well-being in body, mind and soul.

And how will you reach this "pro-active state of well-being"?

1. You're going to start to **love** yourself, just the way you are. God does. He loves you just the way you are. Put a yellow post-it note on your mirror to remind you every time you look at yourself: *God loves me just the way I am.*

**Lord, help me find wholeness in You.**

2. You are going to **decide** to become whole. You are going to embark on a healing journey that will take you right through your whole life, and probably beyond it. You are going to make your wholeness a priority in your life: this is the best gift you can give to yourself, your spouse, your children, your church, your society. And then you are going to do the hardest thing of all: you're going to tell God where you're at, and ask for his help. You're going to tell him that you'll let him do whatever is necessary for you to become whole. But you have to mean it. And then set your fear of change aside. You do believe that he knows best, don't you? OK, then put a yellow post-it note on your Bible or devotional book. Make this prayer part of your daily meditation: *Lord, help me find wholeness in you.*

3. You're going to **give yourself time** to get to know yourself. You're going to take a look at your body, your mind and your soul – and recognize what you've got stored there. That'll take a while. So agree right now that you'll let it take the whole rest of your life. You're not in a hurry. Natural processes of healing take a long time. Put a yellow post-it note inside one of your cupboard doors, or some other place where you'll see it when you're busy: *I can know myself better every day.* Eventually you'll figure out how you're going to approach this huge task of getting to know yourself, but for now here are some ways to think about that.

**I can know myself better every day.**

### Take another look at your body

Your body is a wonderful gift. Imagine all the sensations that give you joy: holding a baby, watching the sun rise, hearing the wind in the trees, smelling new-cut grass, taking that first sip of morning coffee, dancing the tango, biting into a crisp apple, seeing someone you love come through the door, listening to Beethoven's Ninth.

We can experience these things because God – the One without physical being – gave us a physical reality. As a result of the Fall, though, that physical reality is also a curse. We have pain, we sweat, we work, we die. And sometimes we don't feel that good about our bodies. We are much given to low body-esteem. Part of that is probably a distortion of our theology ("flesh" versus "spirit") and part of it is the result of being brought up in a culture that worships a superficial model of beauty.

But the curse on your body was redeemed when that rotting pile of smelly sin got cleaned up once and for all. That's a new white robe you're wearing. Take a look. You're clean! Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Treat it very, very kindly. Give up the idea that somehow your soul will benefit when your body is denied. It isn't true. Your body is an integral part of your whole self. When one part suffers, your whole self suffers. *Both* your body and your soul belong to your faithful Savior. So acknowledge your body, esteem it, listen to it as it tells you what's happening to you. Feel. Listen. Care. Respond. Heal.

### Take another look at your mind

Your mind is the part of you that believes, thinks, feels and wills. It is a vast filing system: old archived files and active new files.

Your mind is the resting place of your belief system. Along with the set of beliefs you've acquired through education and experience is stored a whole body of beliefs which crept in one way or another (some were forced in) without your realizing it. Think

of this section of your mind as a library of photo albums, each entry a stored picture of reality. These form your frame of reference. So start questioning. Watch for what you believe – about everything. If you come across a belief whose origin is unclear to you, or one that you don't find particularly comfortable or helpful, set it aside for further reflection.

Your mind is the source of your thoughts, and their storage place. What you *think* grows out of what you *believe*. Your beliefs about life and its realities will shape your thoughts and interpretations. This is one reason why racism, for example, is so insidious. Rational thought tells us that the color of a person's skin is not an indicator of that person's worth. But a deeply imbedded belief that a certain kind of undesirable characteristic goes with a certain skin color will make that rational thought very uncomfortable. If you experience this kind of discomfort, it is a signal that your thought and belief systems aren't in sync. To achieve wholeness, you'll have to adjust one or the other.

A hard choice. That's why I call this your life's work. I know. I've been there. But each time you go through the process of confronting your thoughts and sorting them out, you'll become more and more clear to yourself. Knowing yourself is the objective.

The mind is the home of your emotions. Your *emotions* arise out of your *beliefs* and your *thoughts*. If any of those is giving you a picture of reality which isn't consistent with your experience, then your emotional expression of yourself is going to have some rough spots in it. A common response to the discomfort of emotions is to put a blanket over them.

The best material for such a blanket is either anxiety or depression – both work very well. But they're expensive. They grind your wholeness into dust. Anger, fear, pain, grief, love: these emotions insist on showing themselves and being acknowledged. You can feel them deep in your body; they have a physical expression. Ignored, they will cause disease and distress.

Your mind is the seat of your intentions. What you finally *do* in any situation is the result of your beliefs, your thoughts, and your emotions about that situation. In the case of your holistic health, your will to become a more whole person will be the determining factor in getting to know yourself.

**Take another look at your soul**

Your soul is that part of you that has access to the eternal. It is the side of yourself that can experience communion with God, grow toward him, tap into his healing power, and provide you with a joy you've never had before.

Our canons are great, our theology beautiful. I love worship services and church events. But my soul, as part of the whole me, needs much more care than that. Everlasting life is not my hope for the future; it is my joy of the present. I have it now. Heaven is the fullness of God's love, both in this life and the one to come. To experience this in the present, you need to take some time for yourself and your soul.

There are many ways to do this. Meditate; learn how, if you don't know. Pray. Experience creation in all its marvels. Read the Bible. Find some soulmates with whom to share your new experiences. Find some good devotional literature. Let your soul be part of your life. There isn't any other way to be whole than to follow this path.

**Take another look at your self**

You are a complex creature, unique and beautiful. In getting to know yourself, you will discover that this is true. You will also discover a powerful Love that holds you and cherishes you. Embrace this new wholeness. Your life, your relationship with yourself, with God, with others and with creation are worth a lot of celebration. Do it. Celebrate.

Help me rest in you, Lord.

# Alternatives in healing

**Diane Klein**

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a bitter spirit rots the bones," said Solomon, long ago (Prov.17:22, KJV). He knew what he was talking about. But then, we would all choose a merry heart, wouldn't we, if we knew how? And failing that, do we have to put up with rotting bones? Well, Solomon thought there was a link. So "holism" is not a totally modern concept!

My advice isn't new either. You've probably heard all this before. But the point is whether you are finally going to get to know yourself, or whether you're going to put it off some more – maybe until you get a chance to confer with Solomon in person. In the meantime, though, you can decide that this is what you are going to do:

1. **Keep a journal**. Buy yourself a nice spiral-bound notebook and plan to spend some time with yourself each day. Write anything you want. Things that happened. Things you felt. Things you learned. Draw or sketch, if you are so inclined. This is your own private dialogue with yourself, so don't plan to show it or share it. Don't think of anyone else reading it. This is for you. At first it will be hard, and then it will get easier and easier. Do it every day.

2. **Pay attention to your body**. First of all, take care of it. Eat a balanced diet, drink plenty of water, get enough sleep (easy for me to say!). This is just common sense, but most of us don't have a good theology of self-care. And then: exercise. I don't mean aerobics. I mean noticing how your body feels, stretching, walking, breathing. A good mind-body connection is built on a high level of body awareness. Explore special mind-body exercises such as tai chi or yoga. Do things that make your body feel good, and enjoy them. (Enjoyment isn't a sin, even though someone in your life may have tried hard to make you believe it is.)

3. **Care for your soul**. There are many ways to do this, and you know most of them. You just don't make them a priority. But start today. Do them. And try a simple soul exercise. Sit comfortably outside for 15 minutes. Notice how your body feels. Relax. Exercise your senses: listen, smell, look at the piece of creation you're sitting in. Talk to God. Ask him to open up your soul so you can be whole. Breathe deeply. Create a picture in your mind of the new whole you, and make yourself feel what that feels like. Wow.

4. **Consider holistic approaches to healing.** These alternative approaches address the person as a whole – as opposed to our more traditional medicine, which focuses on the body's illnesses and symptoms. Holistic alternatives focus on stimulating the body's natural ability to heal itself (acupuncture, chiropractic, homeopathy) or on natural treatments with herbs. Your local library probably has some helpful manuals on these subjects. It's worth a look. You have a whole full life to gain!

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."* (Ps. 139:23.24)

Holistic Health

# God's prescription for 'hurry sickness'

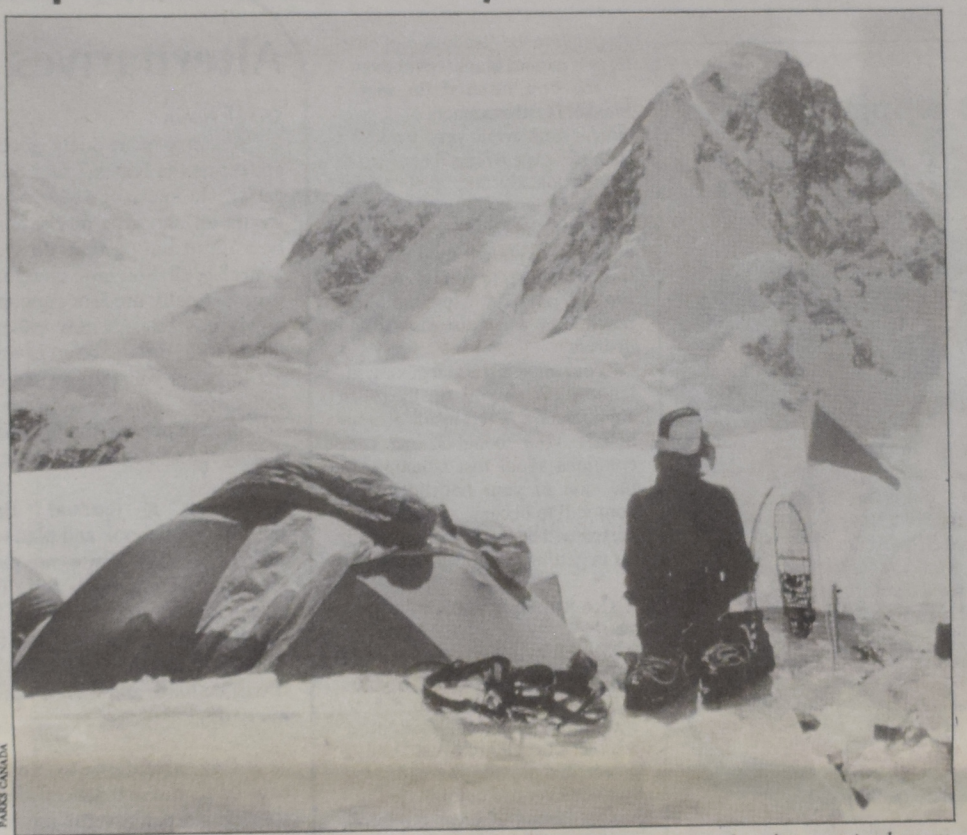
**Glen Van Andel**

We had been hiking for nearly two hours when we passed through the meadows near the top of Skyline Ridge in the Cascade Mountains. The summit was just ahead and I knew what to expect. I had been here many times before. My heart pounded with anticipation as I almost ran up the last switchback on the steep trail that was still covered with snow on this last week in June. I felt like a child on Christmas morning eagerly tearing away the wrapping on a box that contained a very special gift – something I had dreamed about for more than a year.

As I reached the summit I received the gift: a spectacular view of Mt. Baker rising just over the ridge to my right, and the rugged Mt. Shuksan across the deep, grassy gorge directly in front of me.

The daily routine of a hurried life had left me in a spiritual desert, feeling empty and alone.

Now, my thirsty soul was flooded with the realization of God's awesome presence in his creation. God was here with me at this very moment. God was revealing himself to me, and the spectacular beauty of his creation had broken through the barriers that often keep me from establishing a deep, meaningful relationship with him. For the moment I was not distracted by hurry, crowds or noise. He had my full attention.



PARKS CANADA

*I felt like a child on Christmas morning eagerly tearing away the wrapping on a box that contained a very special gift. As I reached the summit I received the gift: a spectacular view.*

## Why the hurry?

Most of us suffer from some form of "hurry sickness." It seems to be part of our heritage, at least in this contemporary era. But, maybe it goes deeper than that. Psychiatrist C. G. Jung once remarked, "Hurry is not of the Devil; it *is* the Devil." The main source of hurry sickness appears to be pride. Our life is often dominated by our ambitions, passions and possessions. "Pride," said C. S. Lewis, "gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next person."

Everyday wants and worries crowd out any sense of peace and contentment which God wants to give us and which we so desperately need to be human. If we ever hope to experience a measure of healing for hurry sickness, we will have to deal with our tendency to compete and compare ourselves with others.

Such a struggle will pit us face-to-face with a choice between greed and gratitude. Henri Nouwen noted in his book *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming*: "Resentment and gratitude cannot coexist, since resentment blocks the perception and experience of life as a gift. My resentment tells me that I don't receive what I deserve. It always manifests itself in envy." In this context, gratitude becomes a discipline that, according to Nouwen, "is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all I am and have is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to be celebrated with joy."

## Surrender to God's beauty

Maybe that is why I am often brought to my knees and humbled by the touch of God's creation. Whether that be a sunset over Lake Michigan or the spectacular view from Skyline Ridge, God is just way out of my league. No matter how hard I work, even my best stuff just doesn't begin to compare with God's work. Such awesome beauty in his world compels me to raise the white flag in surrender, if only for a moment, to celebrate his gifts to me.

God has also provided an antidote for our busy life. He says: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). In other words, rest or be at leisure and trust me for all your needs. Being at leisure requires letting go and letting God take control of our lives. "Leisure," said Joseph Peiper, "is not the inevitable result of spare time, a holiday, a weekend or a vacation. It is, in the first place, an attitude of the mind, a condition of the soul – an attitude of non-activity, of inward calm, of silence, it means not being busy, but letting things happen."

Such a perspective takes courage. No matter how lonely and frustrated we become with the rat race, it is not easy to fight the comfortable routine and live an unfamiliar, experimental life. But we so desperately need the healing touch and presence of God that our only alternative may be to fall on our swords and find space for God.

In the book *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives*, Richard Swenson states: "We must have some room to breathe. We need freedom to think and permission to heal. Our relationships are being starved to death by velocity. No one has time to listen, let alone to love."

Emily, the main character in Thornten Wilder's play *Our Town*, makes this point well. After dying during childbirth, Emily begs the stage manager to allow her to return to visit her birth-family for just one day. Finally, he concedes and she chooses to return on her 12th birthday. However, it is quickly apparent that this special time is not what she expected. Family members almost ignore each other or, at best, carry on superficial conversations, often without ever looking at one another.

## Time to live

Finally, in desperation, she asks the stage manager to take her back to the cemetery from which she came.

"I can't, I can't go on. Oh! Oh. It goes so fast. We don't have time to look at one another."

As she leaves she says, "Oh earth, you're too wonderful for anyone to realize you."

Then she turns to the stage manager and asks, "Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it – every, every minute?"

"No," the stage manager replies. "The saints and poets maybe, they do some."

Carving out times for silence to listen to the still, small voice of God, and to one another requires that we let go of our own plans and self-sufficiency. A careful look at the role and purpose of the Sabbath may be helpful as we seek to re-establish our relationship with God and with others. The Sabbath is a time to remember that we belong to God and we can depend on him to provide for our needs (Deut. 5:15).

Rest from labor and daily activities also helps us confront the myth that our work is our ultimate hope for our present or eternal security (Romans 3:22-24). As the songwriter so beautifully pens, "It's not in trying but in trusting; not in running but in resting; not in wondering but in praying that we find the strength of the Lord."

Nothing we do, no matter how noble or good, will earn us one second in heaven. So in the final analysis, we run into God's arms like a little child after a long day at school and simply rejoice that all of life is a gift from God.

## Day of rest

As we seek to feed our souls by establishing a divine rhythm for our lives, it may be helpful to consider the Sabbath as more than one day in seven in which we stop to worship God as a church community. Rather, we may view any moment or Spirit-empowered experience as a mini-Sabbath in which we remember that we belong to God and take time to rest and rejoice in his provision for us.

For many of us, sunsets, hiking in the mountains and other experiences in nature are such times. But, we may also experience God's presence in a meaningful conversation with a friend or family member, visiting a sick or shut-in person, listening to great music, gardening, praying, singing, or just reflecting on our blessings and God's goodness.

Whatever our ethnic or cultural heritage, hurry sickness has infected nearly all of us in the modern Western world. Our annual check-up reveals that although most of us know about God, few of us really know God.

Unfortunately, the medicine prescribed by the Great Physician, "to be at rest or at leisure," is hard to swallow. It will take courage, but our reward will be a new life that is not only full but fulfilled – a life in which, by God's grace, we might realize *life* while we live it, "every, every minute."

*Glen Van Andel is a professor of physical education at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich.*

Feature

# Behind the lines: A Christian Serb tells his story

**PANCEVO, Yugoslavia** – *As bombs continue to fall on Yugoslavia, leaders of the NATO countries say they are convinced that the bombing will eventually bring peace. Meanwhile, behind the lines in Yugoslavia, many Serbians are wondering what the bombing is all about, and which side is telling the truth about the war.*

*Dragutin Cvetkovic is a young Serbian Christian who lives in Pancevo, a city about 20 km. from Belgrade. Recently, he took courses at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Mich., where he became friends with John VanderStoep of Burlington, Ont.*

*Now back in Yugoslavia, Cvetkovic, who also uses the pen-name "Guta," is trying to survive, and struggles to make sense of the present Balkan war. Cvetkovic has been in contact with Alan Doerksen, of* **Christian Courier**, *by e-mail, and has sent a vivid diary of the ongoing Balkan War. Here are some gleanings from that diary (with a few grammatical corrections) which will give North American readers an unusual glimpse into the ongoing conflict.*

**Dragutin Cvetkovic**

### March 30

My town has been hit five times by NATO in six nigats. It is terrible. Sirens that announce danger from air strikes are carved deep in my mind. Well, life goes on. We do not think about work..., we think of how simply to survive and help.... I do not have access to e-mail often, so I will write to you when I can.

### March 31

Thank you for your prayers. They work. Last night was a long one, with four air strikes on my home town, Pancevo. From my understanding, we may disagree on what to do and how to resolve the problem with the Balkans, but my comfort and what may bind us is that He is alive! The risen Lord gives strength and courage. Otherwise the reality is so apocalyptic and hopeless.

### April 1

This night is a big night here in Serbia. The third phase of NATO activities is anticipated. Our hearts are filled with uncertainty and fears.

I wish that I could send you reports that many have found Christ in this crisis. No, unfortunately I have encountered the opposite: that human hearts have hardened. Most people tend to respond to evil by wishing and doing greater evil. The reports are not encouraging: some of the houses of our students are destroyed; the seriously ill father of our staff worker was released from a hospital to make place for the wounded; a recently diagnosed student with leukemia was discharged from the hospital due to lack of medicine, blood and other circumstances of war, to die at home. Unexploded bombs are lying in the backyard of one of our students' homes as reminders of reality.

But is this the true reality? No, the risen Lord gives us the true reality. Remember the moment when you for the first time encountered the risen Lord! Were not your hearts burning within you?

God gives us mercy to give him praise and honor, to glorify him forever, regardless of circumstances.

### April 8:

When will this bombing halt? Why do Westerners hate Serbs and want to destroy one people in order to protect another, Albanians? These questions take one into a state of despair and hopelessness. Why pray when God does not prevent this suffering? What is God's purpose in this situation?

Last Sunday during worship, sirens announced a NATO air attack. Silence in a small church with 30 to 40 worshipers. What to do? Should we leave and take a shelter, or should we stay? The dilemma was quickly resolved. Children were taken into a basement, and worship continued. "This is my body, which is for you." The Spirit stirred hearts. What was happening? Suddenly this world faded away, and, as the bread and wine were distributed, we all were lifted up into a new sphere with our Lord.

Outside of this sphere, jets were buzzing, sirens were crying of pain, human faces resembled Munch's painting "The Scream." But the Lord was with his chosen people in a mystical yet real way. As God's people were swallowing the bread and wine, their faces started to change. Worried expressions were transformed first into shy smiles. Then faces turned into joyful expressions. In the midst of suffering the Lord brought joy and love. His grace is amazing. The worship was over and people stayed in a hallway talking and encouraging each other. They were trying to postpone departure into the world of sirens and detonations. What stays with them, as a treasure, is the broken body of our Lord Jesus.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WORLD FAITHS

*Suddenly this world faded away, and, as the bread and wine were distributed, we all were lifted up into a new sphere with our Lord.*

May this broken body bind us all, Serbs and Americans..., citizens of Belgrade with French people. One died for many so that all may live. Even though we may disagree on the issue of war and how to resolve the Balkan knot, one thing glues us together, and that is His blood which is shed for us. Please, brothers and sisters, dear friends of Jesus Christ, forgive us for our sins, for the bloodshed of our neighbors. May the Lord Jesus have mercy on us sinners.

### April 15

The war between NATO and Yugoslavia is entering its fourth week. Nothing much has changed.

It is amazing how one can quickly adjust to a war. In the evening when there are no air raids sirens, around 8 p.m., you wonder what is wrong. After hearing them, night can start. This night seems like a real NATO night – clear sky and unlimited visibility. I wish it was cloudy and rainy.

In Novi Sad, the major city of northern Serbia, the second bridge has been destroyed. Only one is left. It was destroyed around 19:45 on the evening between Saturday and Sunday (April 3-4), when there was still traffic on it. Ten seconds before the explosion, the public bus with passengers in it crossed the bridge. In that bus was Slobodan Stojanovic, a member of our student Christian group. Can you imagine, only 10 seconds before the explosion? He is indeed grateful to God for this miracle. I was about 50 metres from the place of explosion. In fact, I was under the bridge. I could not find the words to express the horror of this moment.

I am so grateful to God for his protection. All the buildings around me were damaged. The ground was shaken with the crushing sound of a bridge that disappeared in the cold waves of the Danube. For many people that moment was fatal. A few seconds after the crushing of the bridge, I was able to hear dozens of voices, from the river and on the bridge, crying in despair for help. It was terrible to hear cries and screams of helpless people.... Unfortunately I was not able to help these people. A few were saved, but many more disappeared in the Danube River. I assume that a few hours before this bombing some of the executors of this act were celebrating Easter.

### May 2:

The sixth week of the war continues. By the grace of God, I am safe and sound. To my knowledge all our students are healthy and in safety. A few of them have been drafted, but most are scattered refugees to different places throughout Yugoslavia. Both sides of the war – NATO and Yugoslavia – continue to enforce that old Maoist dictum: "Power grows from the barrel of a gun." How long?

Last week I visited my grandmother, relatives and students in the Serbian southern region. My grandmother, Milica, is a very special person. She is 91 and last week was her birthday. When I was age four, in spite of the fear of communists, Milica secretly baptized me. Last week I got word from relatives that Milica is deeply disturbed and that she wanted to see me. She is the only member of my immediate family still alive. On Tuesday evening, after a good meal, her tearful eyes gazed at me and questions flowed:

"My son, why is this happening to us? I have survived five wars but this one is the worst. You have lived in America, help me to understand why did they choose this way? Does this mean that the whole Serbian nation will be swept from the face of the earth?"

Her tears rolled down her wrinkled cheek, but [her] eyes were full of expectation. "When will our good God bring righteousness and peace together?" We hugged each other and cried. High above us in the darkness of the night sky NATO jets sounded furiously.

My granny, I wish I had words to reply to all your questions. We both knew that God, who was there at the day of my baptism, showed his grace in accepting a child in his covenant. God gave a promise and he has been loyal to us.

To our Lord, my grandmother and I both cried, pleading for his mercy. "Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation" ( Ps. 85:7)

Our hope and faith in Jesus Christ is our anchor to hold on to while waiting for that day when righteousness and peace will kiss each other. Oh, how we long for that morning!

**Blessings and love from your Sojourner, Guta**

# Grieving the loss of a dream

Peter and Marja are IN

**Dear P & M:**

*How do you help someone who is in a state of feeling angry and sorry for herself because she does not have a marriage partner and a family of her own by now? She has prayed about this for years and feels that she must take things into her own hands, since God has not answered her prayers. So despite being a professing Christian, she recently decided to date a man who is separated from his wife but not divorced.*

*Her family was strongly opposed, but she responded by saying it was her life to live as she saw fit. That relationship is now over because of his dissatisfaction with the relationship, but the family can no longer trust and respect her as they once did. Now she has resorted to using the personal ads because she says that it is the only way she will find a partner. Is that taking matters into your own hands or is God leading her down that path?*

**Dear Trying To Understand:**

Your friend is grieving the loss of a dream. She needs understanding and a compassionate listening ear. The last thing she needs is judgment, especially from her own family. What she needs is someone who will stand by her, regardless. If you can be that person and give her your unconditional love, you will help her immensely.

It is important for you to understand that her desire for a marriage partner and for a family is normal. No one should challenge her on that. Well-adjusted and content single adults have often expressed such longings to us over our years in the ministry. Many of them will relate to your friend's attempts to find a partner.

Now it is certainly true that the way that she has gone about finding a partner leaves something to be desired. But she has biblical company. We are reminded of the stories of Rachel and Hannah in the Old Testament, two women who would readily identify with her feelings. Yes, both had a husband. But they, too, experienced deep depression because God did not immediately answer their prayers for a child of their own. Rachel, in particular, took things into her own hands and gave her handmaiden, Bilhah, to her husband before finally giving birth to Joseph and dying while giving birth to Benjamin. You would do well to read the stories of these two women again (Gen. 29:31-30:24; 1 Samuel 1).

**The kind of loss and lack of fulfillment** which your friend is experiencing involves all the emotions felt by Rachel and Hannah, including jealousy of siblings, impatience with God and "bitterness of soul" (1 Sam. 1:10). Your friend's kind of loneliness hurts and these two women would certainly empathize with her.

Still, these two Old Testament women bear witness to two important truths. The first may help *you*; the second may help *her*. Truth number one: when you take things into your own hands, God can still bless the result. This he did by raising up two significant tribes from the sons that Bilhah the handmaiden bore (Dan and Naphtali). Truth number two: those who wait upon the Lord with a prayerful heart will receive God's answer in his own time and in his own way. This he did by finally giving Hannah a son named Samuel — and five other children!

We are not suggesting that your friend will definitely marry and that God will definitely bless her with children. But we do believe that the person who "lets go and lets God" will find peace and a deep sense of fulfillment in whatever answer God gives and whatever direction he leads.

**Sensitive to your friend's very real pain**, we hope you can lovingly encourage her to set her sights higher when it comes to faith. The Christian who loves herself will not settle for less than a partner who shares her love for the Lord. Anything less is disrespectful to herself and will ultimately make her life lonelier than she is now. She can increase her chances of finding a Christian life-partner by volunteering for Christian organizations, attending Christian singles conferences and submitting her name to Christian dating services, or the personals in CC. She should take the initiative. But let her take it in ways that increase the possibility of finding a Christian mate.

Perhaps the biggest lesson that your friend has to learn is one that we all need to learn, that true happiness is based on the self-awareness that she is a fearfully and wonderfully made masterpiece (Ps. 139:14). True contentment arises out of a close relationship with the Lord, who gives us strength in every situation, be that single or married, childless or quiver-full (Phil. 4:12,13). This kind of positive self-image comes from applying God's love to oneself and from sensing the love and support of people like you even when our loneliness makes us do foolish but forgivable things.

A Christian counsellor can also help her deal with her frustrated dreams and any deeper issues that might explain her lack of joy. One of those issues may well be a family which loves her conditionally, withholding trust and respect when she does not meet their expectations about how to think and act.

***Please note that Peter and Marja have come to the bottom of the mailbag. There are no letters on file for future columns. Summer is a lazy time and we fear that, unless readers take the effort to write in for advice, this column will be suspended for the summer.***

**Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.**

*Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.*

# Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

## Emotional and spiritual connections

"I would like to know what God has in store for me," says Brian, looking pale and anxious.

"Are you getting any sense of what that may be?" I ask.

"No, but I'm always looking for clues and signs," he replies.

"Where do you think you could begin to ...."

"I don't know!" he interrupts, "that is why I am asking God to help me out!"

Many of us can identify with Brian's frustration. When troubled we struggle honestly and urgently with wanting to do whatever God has in mind for us. But easy answers are rarely forthcoming. And so we wait, while symptoms of cracks in our emotional lives play havoc with the rest of our lives.

Brian has been feeling overwhelmed for two years now. He is unable to sleep and shows up for work inconsistently. (He manages to keep his job because he belongs to a union.) He also has difficulty communicating effectively with his teenaged daughter; her demands for her own life anger him. Furthermore, he is worried about his family's financial situation, about which his wife knows nothing.

When Brian began experiencing difficulties he pleaded with God to take care of them. Sometimes it seemed God heard his prayers. Other times he was far away. Lately, he believes God has let him down.

### Confused about the connection

Brian is confused about the connection between emotional and spiritual growth. M.R. Mulholland Jr. in *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* writes that we often object to the notion that psychology is a substitute for spirituality. However, we readily believe the opposite — that spirituality is a substitute for psychology, and the answer to all our problems.

The author laments that, often, emotional problems are met with demands for deeper faith, more rigorous obedience and more vital spirituality. Unfortunately, this encourages us to have unrealistic expectations of God to fix our problems.

Mulholland clarifies that emotional brokenness needs treatment the same way that a broken bone needs to be set and healed. If the "bone" is not set, we will limp along in life hoping our faith will take care of the issues we do not have the courage to face. This prolongs our suffering and causes more relationship difficulties.

For this reason I hope this column will provide some clarity about our emotional life and how our faith can strengthen us when we seek healing or change.

Brian's symptoms exemplify emotional "stuckness." Our emotions (all the processes — feeling, thinking, doing) automatically guide us, and try to keep us stable. But when life becomes complicated these patterns no longer work, and change is necessary.

Brian needs to examine what makes him feel so overwhelmed. He needs to become aware of the dynamics between himself and his daughter. He also needs to work towards a healthier relationship with his wife so that they can share their financial burden.

Knowing God is about living our Christian faith in all aspects of our lives. But we are often uncomfortable when we realize that our faith needs to be reflected in our interactions with our loved ones. However, we need to trust God to walk with us as we explore our emotional lives, too, so that we can live more effectively for him.

*Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C. The therapeutic characters and situations she will write about in her columns are fictional, but reflect many people's struggles.*

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## Comment

# Where's the way out?

*Dear Mary,*

Have you been thinking about Kosovo? I have, and I don't know how to in a biblical way.

I own *The Bridge over the Drina* by Ivo Andric, published shortly after WW II and translated into many languages. In it, the author, a Bosnian, describes a small town situated on both sides of a river and held together by a bridge built in the 16th century.

Over the bridge march the nations and religions of Europe and Asia in successive raids on other nations and religions, but every time each army leaves a few people behind. Those settle, until many nations and religions are represented, and live in some kind of harmony on either and both sides of the bridge. Until almost the end of the book.

It is the book I reread when Bosnia was in the news. It is the book I shall reread now that Kosovo is in the news. It explains a lot of what's going on in the Balkans, but it does not explain everything. It does not explain, although it describes on occasion, ultimate evil.

One of my problems is: who, or where, is ultimate evil? Milosovic, especially as portrayed in our own media and by the spin doctors in Brussels, London and Washington, D.C.? But then, each historical evil in Eastern Europe seems to be a reaction to some previous historical evil there also. Not so long ago Serbs in large numbers were booted out of Croatia, for instance. Croats also sided with the Nazis, and who wouldn't get angry at them for that? The whole region seems to be a cauldron of hate and revenge.

**But then, we read of killing fields in Asia and Africa,** and the church has the Crusades, the Inquisition and Servetus in its closet, just to name a few of its skeletons. Not to speak of World War II and the abject failure of European Christendom to stand in the way of Hitler until it was far too late and the damage was done.

But let me push the envelope. Am I sure that I would not be caught up in some local frenzy of hate against some strange-clad human being with odd habits and perpetual garlic on his breath? Evil is real, and to pretend it does not exist in my own life is to shout down my own reality.

How, in this time of hate, should Christians feel, think and act? I simply do not know. I would like to stop the big bad M in Serbia. But in NATO trying to stop him, more Kosavars seem homeless now that would have been had that big bad M. been let alone. Moreover, isn't it ironic that a Clinton country so loaded down with guns is also marvelously chicken when it comes to using them when others most certainly will shoot back? A lot of debate about whether to commit ground troops or abandon the air raids has to do with losing or maintaining political face. I've heard the phrase quite often, "We can't back down now." Why not, I ask? It's not so bad to back down when you've fought an otherwise good fight and can't win.

**I'm stuck. Stuck past prayers, and feeling both disgusted** and sad as I watch TV. I have not yet heard an authentic Christian voice that gives me a way out. Maybe it's time for a futile gesture. Like walking into Kosovo clad only in a hairy mantle, eating wild honey and locusts, while shouting to everyone within earshot: "Repent! Repent!"

I know this much: clever talk, pundit talk and my own talk hasn't helped thus far. I feel overwhelmed, helpless and guilty about this situation. And defeated when I realize that all those pathetic and helpless children I see on my TV are already being taught to remember these days, and the enemies that caused their misery. Tales told until such a time, perhaps in only 200 years, when they can be the oppressors of those who oppress them now.

Mary, do you see a way out?

*Adrian*

*Dear Adrian,*

We seem to be back to the subject of evil.

I share your frustration in trying to think about this crisis in Kosovo, which is, as you point out, merely the latest of many "ethnic cleansings." How can we understand these orgies of vengeance over events of hundreds of years ago? How do we understand hatred passed down from parents to children for generations until it is embedded in the fabric of whole peoples?

It helps to know history, I guess. I found James Payton's article on Kosovo in a recent *Christian Courier* to be enlightening and helpful. And yet there is a dimension to the situation which goes beyond rational explanations. People aren't particularly motivated by reason. I discovered that when I was working at the micro level as a therapist. People are motivated by passion. And passion is so easily inflamed on a large scale by appealing to a real or imagined injustice, or injury to self-interest, or to an attack on one's god.

**But why is it that the passions aroused** seem always to be destructive? Why is hatred so much easier to incite than love? Why are people driven not by a desire for justice but by a need for revenge? And what is it that is driving NATO?

When I was a therapist, I had a few clients who had endured murderous abuse over long periods of time. Part of their response was a vicious and murderous hatred of the abuser and of life itself, which they acted out mostly on themselves by self-mutilation and suicide attempts. There was no reasoning in the world by which I could shake either their feeling or their actions. All I could finally do was to repeat over and over, mantra-like (as much for my benefit as theirs, since I was at my wit's end) that love is stronger than hate, and life stronger than death.

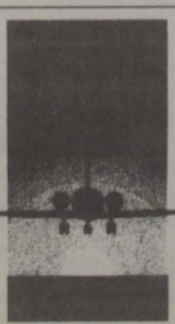
Rational? No way. But that's gospel. Fundamentally non-rational. It takes a heap of faith to believe it, especially in the face of the kind of hate and murder going on in Kosovo, Rwanda, Israel, Ireland, you name it.

I had the privilege of seeing in a few lives that those words were true. But can we somehow put that into practice on a global scale? How? Maybe your John the Baptist impersonation wouldn't be such a futile gesture after all. It would offer more hope than bombing, at least if both those being bombed and those doing the bombing would get the message.

But is our faith strong enough to believe that?

*Mary*

*Adrian Peetoom is a retired educational editor who lives in Waterloo, Ont. Mary Vander Vennen is a retired therapist who lives in Toronto.*

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## News Comment

# Nose for News

Bert Hielema

**THE WAR IN KOSOVO.** Ethnic cleansing. It never happened in North America? Well ... this is what Major Wynkoop reported not all that long ago to the inquiry into the extermination of a camp of Indians by the First Cavalry Company of Colorado: "Women and children were killed and scalped, babies killed at their mothers' breasts and all the corpses were most horribly mutilated.... The women's corpses were profaned in a way that makes you sick in the telling, and throughout, Colonel Chivington was inciting his troops to commit their diabolical outrages."

There was a small child, his report went on, probably three years old, just old enough to walk in the sand. The Indians had fled and the child was trying to reach them. He was stark naked, just walking in the sand. Wynkoop saw a man dismount at about 80 yards, lift his gun and shoot. He missed. Another man arrived and said that *he* could "get the bastard." He dismounted, knelt down and fired. He also missed. A third man said the same, then fired. The child fell.

Think of it. There now are Tomahawk missiles and Apache helicopters in the Allied Forces' arsenal. A Tomahawk was the Indians' axe and the Apaches were, as the Sioux, victims of appalling ethnic cleansing. What would we say in 50 years or so if the Serbian armed forces, after their ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, decided to call one of their missiles "Kosovar"?

**JUNE IS A GOOD MONTH** for the aviation business in Paris. When the air show opens there, the tents will be full of executives showing their lunch guests slow-motion videos of smart ( i.e., expensive ) missiles being guided with pinpoint accuracy to their intended target. Of course, the pictures will not show hits on embassies, on columns of refugees or buses or hospitals.

Unless the West is prepared to launch a ground operation, the latest Balkan war will end in a compromise and then we will see the arrival of Western multinationals and Westerns contractors first in line to bid on the big clean-up operation, to be financed by the European banks.

War! It's good for business!

**BUT BUSINESS** is not particularly good for God's creatures. Corn, the strain called Bt, has been used in the U.S. since 1996. It is genetically engineered to produce a natural pesticide that kills cornborers and other insects in the larval stage. However, it has now been discovered that pollen from this corn can kill monarch butterflies who feed on milkweed dusted with pollen blown by the wind from the artificially altered plants. Half of these beautiful creatures died within four days. *Time* magazine, the *Guardian Weekly* and the *Globe and Mail* all found this a significant news item. *Time* devoted two pages to this both because this was not at all expected, and also because eight million acres have been planted with this adulterated brand of corn.

These genetically modified brave new varieties now include beans and grains with more protein, caffeine-less coffee beans, and in the works are some 50 gene-spliced food plants, including squash, melons, carrots, onions, peppers, apples. All are untested and all potentially harmful: in Great Britain they call these the "Frankenstein foods."

God created a great variety of plants, which, when used properly, provide a perfect balance. God loves diversity. Not one snowflake is the same. Not one person is exactly like another. Business hates variety. It wants monoculture on its terms.

**WHEN I ATTENDED** the Willem Lodewijk Gymnasium ( a type of high school) in Groningen, the Netherlands, we had no more than 100 students in the six grades. The high schools where recent shootings took place all had well in excess of 1,000 students. Now studies show that students make better grades in smaller schools. They are less likely to be involved in fights, are less embarrased to discuss problems with their teachers, they have better attendance and lower drop out rates, and participate more in extracurricular activities. Smaller schools may cost a bit more, but there also is a human cost for the impersonal institutions in which young people are left adrift on their own in a world that soon will reach another milestone.

When I was born in 1928, the world contained about two billion people. Projections are that around my birthday in mid-October a child will be born in the Third World who will push the world population over the six billion mark. The odds are, narrowly, that it will be a boy because there are 105 boys born for every 100 girls worldwide. The next billion will take another 14 years.

Even with a higher male birthrate, adult women outnumber men 51-49 in the Western world. And many of these women work much more than men, so much more that the German Green Party wants to change the law to require men to do 50 per cent of the housework when both they and their wives have jobs. They want paragraph 1356 of the Civil Code to read: "Housework is to be done in partnership." Apparently a third of German women have to do housework all alone. I wonder what would happen if a husband refuses to abide by the new law. What sort of punishment? Boot camp? Community work? Any suggestions?

**I THINK A RECENT NEWS** item about Dolly is good news. You remember Dolly, the first sheep cloned a little over two years ago? It has now been discovered that cloned animals age faster than is normal. So all is not well on the cloning front; perhaps this will stop the cloners from clowning around with this sort of thing.

**I JUST READ A BOOK**: *Aftermath: the Remnants of War*. In France, demolition experts are still deactivating bombs and grenades left over from World War I! On the worst battlefields 1,000 artillery shells fell per square metre. Given that 15 per cent did not blow up, that means that there still are 1,500,000 unexploded shells per hectare in some places. No wonder that in the hills around Verdun a million soldiers died, of which the remains of only 290,000 have been discovered, leaving more than 710,000 men simply swallowed up by millions of explosions and tons of mud. In France, even today, 80 years after the war, millions of acres are still off limits: *Terrain Interdit*: forbidden ground. There are still 60 million landmines in various parts of the world: Serbia, Kosovo, Kuwait, Angola, Somalia, Mozambique. The average manufacturing cost is $3. To detect and remove them costs $1,000 a piece: $60 billion.

I think you will agree that had the statesmen, politicians and military leaders known what sort of cruel war WWI was to become, they all would have backed away from the brink. But most of them thought the war would be over in short order. The Allies mismanaged the war both militarily and economically. A German fatality cost the Allies $16,754, while the Germans killed their enemies for just $5,133 apiece. I wonder what the statistics are for Serbian soldiers killed.

**A RECENT ISSUE** of the *Economist* opens with these lines: "Remember, they are always watching you. Use cash whenever you can. Do not give your telephone number, social security number or address, unless you absolutely have to. Do not fill in questionnaires or respond to telemarketers. Block caller ID on your phone and keep your number unlisted. In an increasingly wired world people are continually creating information about themselves that is recorded and often sold or pooled with information from other sources."

*The Economist* predicts that even then all the efforts to remain private will fail. It used to be that in the village everybody knew everybody else's business. In the future nobody will know for certain who knows what about them. Is that Big Brother watching us? Is the Brave New World being realized? Is there a way out?

*Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont. He would like more feedback, and occasionally feels that he is writing for an unmoveable body of people, unable to react to anything anymore or change their minds.*

**DRESS TALKS: but what does it say?**
**September 6, 1999**

***Don't look now -- but what you're wearing is giving you away.*** Submissions wanted for this back-to-work, back-to-school issue:
**Theoretical**: What does the way a person dresses say about that person, her beliefs, his worldview?
**Real Life**: Dressing kids for school – practicality or peer pressure? Help our readers understand what this is about – and what to do about it!
**Lifestyle**: How might a Christian "dress for success"? Does the Bible have anything to say re: modern dress?
**Dressing for church, or: Is the queen really coming for tea?** Anything from the whimsical to the ridiculous. Win the C.C. "I can't believe I wore that" T-shirt!
**Deadlines:**
Proposal: August 6, 1999
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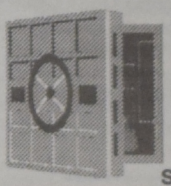

**THE WELL-TENDED TALENT: buried or used?**
**September 20, 1999**

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There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged pci, but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable internet image.

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*Christian Courier* would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is $35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at $15 per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.

**NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS**

We offer a $25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in *Christian Courier* AND to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.

**SUBMITTING YOUR AD**

**mail:** *Christian Courier*
#4 - 261 Martindale Road
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
**fax:** 905-682-8313
**email:** ccadpromo@aol.com

**OTHER INFORMATION**

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.

b) Please provide us with clear copy. *Christian Courier* is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.

## Anniversary

Loppersum Guelph
the Neth. Ont.
1949 June 16 1999

With thankfulness to God for His love, we are happy to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents, grand-parents, and great-grand-parents:

**JOHN & JOPIE DOORNBOS**
**(nee KRAM)**

May the Lord continue to bless them and keep them in His care. With love and congratulations from your family.
Jenny & Harry Thalen
Coby & Webb Kamminga
Charly Doombos & Melinda Barnwell
Nancy & Ron Ferwerda
Wendy & Bob Pauw
16 grandchildren and one great-grandchild

Open house: Saturday, June 19, 1999, from 1-3 p.m., First Christian Reformed Church, 287 Water St., Guelph, Ont.

## Anniversaries

*Congratulations to Kornelis and Jantje Vording on their 55th wedding anniversary.*

1944 June 16 1999

Wedding Text: Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young - a place near your altar, O Lord Almighty, my King and my God. (Ps. 84:3)

With praise and thanksgiving to God, we rejoice on the occasion of the 55th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents,

**KORNELIS & JANTJE VORDING**
**(nee SCHIPPER)**

We pray that the Lord will continue to bless and keep you in his care. With love and congratulations:
Ralph & Joanne Vording – Belmont, Ont.
Cindy & Richard (Philip, Joyanna), Jim, Jennifer & Chris (Zackery, Joshua), Wendy & Kristian
John & Ineke Vording – Fonthill, Ont.
Matthew, Luke
Jack Vording – Woodstock, Ont.
Estelle Vording – Woodstock, Ont.
Marc & Jennifer, Darryl
Bill & Lin Vording – Embro, Ont.
Scott & Nancy, Steven & Lauren, Shawn
Luke & Cecile Vording – Eastwood, Ont.
Daniella, Michelle, Monique, Glenn
Jane & Herman House – Sweaburg, Ont.
Michael, Kelly

Home address: 1168 Mohawk St., Woodstock, ON N4T 1A4

**PETER & LYDIA DEMIK**
**(nee VANDELFT)**

We are pleased to announce that on June 12, 1999, our parents are celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary. We wish for them, God's continued blessing and all our love,
Peter & Selina Demik
Hannan, P.J., Quinn
Lisa & Jerry Ellens
Matthew, Caitlynn
Paul & Cheryl Demik
Lianna Demik
Philip & Sonya Demik

Drayton Guelph
Ont. Ont.
1959 June 25 1999

The Lord willing, we hope to celebrate with our dear parents and grandparents,

**KARL BIEL & GRACE**
**BIEL-LUBBERTS**

the occasion of their 40th wedding anniversary.

With gratitude to God, we pray that He will continue to bless them and keep them in His care always.

Their thankful children and grandchildren; John, Glenda & Don, Sandra & Tim, Jocelyn, Kaitlyn, Karalyn, Tia & Holly.

Open house on Saturday, June 26, 1999, at the First Christian Reformed Church in Guelph from 2-4 p.m.

Weston Bracebridge
Ont. Ont.
1959 June 13 1999

"Cast all your cares on Him for He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7)

**KOOP & JANNY MULDER**

We are so thankful for God's abounding grace bestowed upon Mom & Dad, Oma & Opa over these past 40 years. Through good times and bad, we have felt the loving arms of Jesus surround us time and time again. It is with great joy that we celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents. We love you very much:
John – celebrating in Heaven with Jesus
Henrietta – Bracebridge
Jeanetta & Jack VanLeeuwen – Bracebridge
Luke, Kristen, Ben

Home address: R.R. 6, Moore Road, Bracebridge, ON P1L 1X4, phone 705-645-9726

Strathroy Richmond Hill
Ont. Ont.
June 10, 1959

With thanks and praise to God, we wish to announce the 40th wedding anniversary of

**ALBERT & MARTHA TAMMING**
**(nee LINKER)**

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Col. 3:17)

Our love and congratulations, Mom and Dad, Oma and Opa!

We pray that the Lord will continue to bless you and keep you in his care.
Bonnie & Chris
Jessica
John & Eleanor
Katie-Beth, Annalise, Mark, Daniel
Joanne & Bruce
Gary & Rose
Jason, Spencer, Lauren
David & Arlene
Timothy (in heaven)

Home address: 70 Baif Blvd., Apt. 605, Richmond Hill, ON L4C 5L2

## For rent

**COZY SUMMER HOME FOR RENT.** Our home is for rent during July and August, Lake Huron, near Sarnia, Ont. Access to beautiful sandy beach. Fully furnished, linen included, 2 baths, laundry. $800/wk. Phone/fax 519-899-2522, akkooy@tct.net

Our **new home** is for rent during **July and August** on **beautiful Vancouver Island. Country setting.** Adults only. Minimum one month. For more info phone or fax 250-748-1465.

## For Rent

**Vacationing in beautiful British Columbia** on a budget? **One bedroom suite, centrally located in the Fraser Valley**, available year round (ski season, too!). For daily, weekly, monthly rates, call 604-856-8183. Mark & Angela Struyk-Huyer, Aldergrove, BC Canada

## Birthdays

It is with great joy and thankfulness to the Lord that we announce the 90th birthday of our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother
**ALICE B. ELGERSMA - MONTSMA**
on June 10, 1999.

Her thankful children:
John & Sylvia Dykstra
Steve & Jenny Elgersma
John & Lynne Elgersma
Andy & Joanne Elgersma
Leo & Alice Elgersma
Otto & Tena Kiers
Martha Verschoor
Dave & Jane Hadden
Ray & Gerda Elgersma
Brian & Helen Cowan
46 grandchildren and 71 great-grandchildren.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

Open house will be from 2 - 4 p.m. on Saturday, June 12, 1999, at Park View Meadows, Townsend, Ont.

Her address is: 76 Towncentre Dr., Brookview Apt. 303, Townsend, ON N0A 1S0

**SUSAN (SJOUKJE) GREIDANUS TIERSMA**

*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." (Lam. 3:22-24)*

We give thanks to God for our mom, grandma and great-grandma on the occasion of her 90th birthday on June 6, 1999.

We are deeply grateful for her love expressed in many letters, daily prayer, words of encouragement and countless conversations.

To each of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren she is a precious gift.

Janice & Horace (deceased) Baker – Sarnia
Sidney & Marie Greidanus – Grand Rapids
Morris & Alice Greidanus – Grand Rapids
Tom & Janet Greidanus – Edmonton
Beatrice & George Vandervelde – Toronto
Wilma & Vern Gleddie – Edmonton
Peter & Bette Greidanus – Lethbridge
Helen & Gil Vergilio – Surrey, B.C.

Correspondence address: Summit Village, #106, 10041 - 149 St., Edmonton, AB T5P 4V7

The Lord has honored us with a celebration of love. Please join our families in an open house for
**KARSTINA FOKKENS**
**(nee DYKMAN)**
on her 80th birthday. This special day will be held on Monday, June 21, 1999, from 10-? a.m. at Sunset Homes Building C rec room.

Home address: Apt. 310, Sunset Homes Building C, 2 White St., St. Catharines, Ont. Best wishes only.

# Classifieds

## Anniversaries

**GERRY & GRACE KOOISTRA**
**(nee SINNINGHE)**

1950 June 26 1999
Schiermonnikoog Fenwick
& Hoogkerk, the Neth. Ont.

"Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7)
The Lord willing, we hope to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents. Along with their grandchildren, we invite our friends and relatives to join us for an open house on June 26, 1999, from 2-4 p.m. at the Orthodox Reformed Church, Wellandport Rd., Wellandport, Ont.
Rob & Cobie Kooistra
John & Deb Kooistra
Rosemary & Gary Chambers
Dave & Evelyn Kooistra
Home address: Box 11, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0

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1954 June 3 1999
We give thanks to God for the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents,
**ARIE & ELLEN VAN EEK**
**(nee PLOEGSTRA)**
and pray that God will grant them many more years together in loving service of their Lord and of each other. We look forward to marking this occasion with our family gathering this summer. With much love,
Calvin & Gloria Van Eek – Kitchener, Ont.
Andrew, Helena, Ellen
Jane & George Nieuwenhuis – Calgary, Alta.
Daniel, Ruth, Esther, Lisa
Esther Van Eek & Simon du Toit – Sioux Center, Iowa
Katherine, Nicholas
Shirlene & Mike Abma – Grand Rapids, Mich.
Annalise, Aaron, Lydia
John & Julie Van Eek – Strathroy, Ont.
Rebecca
Home address is: 23 Niska Dr., Waterdown, ON L0R 2H3

## Obituary

**JOHN VANDERVELDE**
went to be with his Lord on June 1, 1999, at age 84.
"For the Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever; and His faithfulness to all generations."
(Psalm 100:5)
He is survived by four sons and daughters-in-law,
Jake & Tineke
George & Beatrice
Harry & Margaret
John & Karin
one daughter and son-in-law,
Sandee & Dave Wilhelm
24 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren; one brother, Keith Vandervelde, and two sisters, Jet Venhuizen and Aafke Edens; a son-in-law, Cor VanderVinne, and his wife, Elizabeth Kroon. John was predeceased by his wife, Alice, in 1998, and by his daughter, Freda VanderVinne, in 1992.
Correspondence Address: Harry & Margaret Vandervelde, 353 Hollick-Kenyon Rd., Edmonton, AB T5Y 2T6

## Obituaries

The Lord took unto Himself, on Sunday, April 25, 1999, at the age of 78,
**JOSEPH BOUMA**
Beloved husband of Martha (nee VanAbbema).
Loving father of:
Richard & Trudy Bouma
Helen & Gord Haan
Tillie & Ralph Aardema
John & Lilian Bouma
Agnes & Bert Zwart
Stan & Renee Bouma
Dear Brother of:
Akke & the late Martin Talsma
Frank & Inke Bouma
Jantje & Wietse VanderMeer
Gerry & the late Ted Vandergoot
Marie & Peter DeBoer
Okke & Nita Bouma
Ray & Clara Bouma
The late Fenny & Martin Geertsma
Pake will be sadly missed by his 19 grandchildren and one great grandchild. The funeral service was held at Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, Bowmanville, Ont. on April 28, 1999.
"My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken." (Psalm 62:1,2)

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1961 - 1999
**JERRY JAMES JONKHEER**
On May 10, 1999, after a serious illness our beloved son, brother and uncle entered into the eternal joy of his Lord whom he loved and served.
"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."
(1 Cor. 2:9)
We will miss you, Jerry!
Gerry & Wilma Jonkheer – Whitby, Ont.
Jennifer & Ed Vander Ploeg (Reuben, Jay, Chantelle, Joseph)
Carla & Bright Omoruyi (Adam, Stewart)
Funeral service was held at Hebron Christian Reformed Church, 407 Crawforth St., Whitby, Ont. at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 15, 1999.
The last episode of his Eh JJ Show in May became a special memorial in memory of him aired on Vision TV, Toronto, Ont. and on The Miracle Channel, Lethbridge, Alta.

## Job Opportunity

**CHATHAM, Ont.:** For those who have recently graduated from a university program with a business/computer degree, there is an excellent opportunity for employment at **Chatham Christian High School**. This position will require **managing the computer network** at our new facility as well as **some teaching and staff development**. There is some flexibility with creating a suitable job description and we are open to **full- or part-time** employment. Please address inquiries to:
**Mr. John Van Pelt**
**90 Park Ave. E.**
**Chatham, ON N7M 3V4**
**phone: 519-352-4591**
**fax: 519-352-3476**

## Teachers

**BRAMPTON, Ont.: John Knox Christian School** is inviting applications for an opening in the **intermediate level**. Specialties in **Science and French** would be an asset but not absolutely necessary. Please send a resume, including a philosophy of Christian education to:
**Ms. Hilda Roukema**
**John Knox Christian School**
**82 McLaughlin Rd. S.**
**Brampton, ON L6Y 2C7**
**phone: 905-451-3236 fax: 905-451-3448**

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**RENFREW, Ont.: Renfrew District Christian School** is looking to fill a **full-time primary teacher** opening **September 1999**. Responsibilities will include working in a **multi-grade** setting with approximately 10-14 students. Please forward applications with your resume, including your philosophy of Christian education by June 23, 1999, to:
**Miss Jennifer Feenstra, Principal**
**Renfrew District Christian School**
**354 Steward Ave.**
**P. O. Box 818**
**Renfrew, ON K7V 4H2**
**phone/fax: 613-432-4340**

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**SMITHVILLE, Ont.: Covenant Christian School and John Knox Christian School** are presently in the process of amalgamating. We are inviting applications for a position in the **intermediate division** plus a **part-time music teacher.** If you are interested in either of these positions, please send a copy of your resume and cover letter no later than June 17, 1999, to:
**Mr. M. Elzinga**
**Covenant Christian School**
**6470 Regional Rd. #14**
**Smithville, ON L0R 2A0**
**fax 905-957-7794**

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**SASKATOON, Sask: Saskatoon Christian School** is an accredited, independent, interdenominational school. We are accepting resumes for a **junior high position to teach language arts, social studies and physical education**. Please include with the resume a statement of faith and philosophy of Christian education. Send to:
**Wes Vanstone, Principal**
**2410 Haultain Ave.**
**Saskatoon, SK S7J 1R3**
**phone: 306-343-1494**
**fax: 306-343-0366**

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**PORT ALBERNI, B.C.: Port Alberni Christian School,** an interdenominational school located on Vancouver Island, with approximately 90 students in K-9, invites applications from qualified teachers for an **upper elementary/junior high position.** Strengths in Music or Computer Studies will be an asset. Please send resume and letter of application to:
**Wernart van Deventer**
**Port Alberni Christian School**
**4006 - 8th Ave.**
**Port Alberni, BC V9Y 4S4**
**phone: 250-723-2700**
**fax: 250-723-5799**

## Job Opportunities

***Christian Courier***
is looking for an energetic
**EDITOR**

who will, via editorials and personal and electronic interaction with current and new readers and contributors, help promote CC's vision and mission and re-shape our future. Applicant should have journalistic training and writing experience, be a team player and be able to appeal to thoughtful biblical Christians of all ages and from a variety of church traditions.

We strive to be faithful to Scripture in the neo-Calvinist tradition, to foster and communicate a biblical worldview, and to challenge readers to apply biblical principals to their lives and the issues of our day.

Contact: **Marian Van Til, Managing Editor**.
E-mail: ccmneditor@aol.com; 1-800-969-4838. 261 Martindale Rd., Unit 4, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.

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**SALES SUBCONTRACTORS**
**Canadian firm seeks Program Coordinators to market its public relations programs in western and central Canada.**
*Income 30-50K+. Appreciate Christian morals and principals. Sales experience helpful but not necessary. Training provided.*
**Call for qualifying telephone interview on Mondays a.m.: President, Community Service Systems, 613-258-7730.**

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**Indian Family Centre, Winnipeg**
seeks a person
who has a calling to serve as
**Director of Ministry**

with proven management experience in
- cooperative leadership working with the Aboriginal community in a holistic healing ministry.
- community development enabling a self directing community
- dealing in freeing ways with issues affecting inner city people
- cross-cultural communication.

Indian Family Centre is an established inner city ministry of the **Christian Reformed Church**. It functions as a spiritual healing place where staff and community members respond to needs through hospitality, healing, spiritual growth, cultural integration and family support.

The Director of Ministry
- is committed to a Christian lifestyle
- joins people in their healing walk with God
- honors and respects the Aboriginal spiritual understanding of life.

*Salary and Benefits determined by the Christian Reformed Church. Closing date July 2, 1999.*

**For more information contact**: Indian Family Centre
phone: 204-586-7961, e-mail: ifc@mb.sympatico.ca
**Send resumes:**
Attn: Chair of the Hiring Committee, Indian Family Centre,
470 Selkirk Ave, Winnipeg, MB R2W 2M5

## Classifieds

### Teachers

**CHATHAM, Ont.: Chatham Christian High School** is seeking applications for a **full-time teaching position** in **Science**. Send your resume to:
**Mr. John Van Pelt**
**90 Park Ave. E.**
**Chatham, ON N7M 3V4**
**phone: 519-352-4591**
**fax: 519-352-3476**

### Personal

**Retired Dutch Canadian widower, 63, United Reformed, would like to meet Christian lady,** southern Ontario. Please send letters to **File #2687, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

### For rent

**CLINTON, ONTARIO**
**ADULT LIFE LEASE RESIDENCES**
available 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info. call **(519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.**

### Miscellaneous

**BED & BREAKFAST.** Beautiful **Niagara**. Easy walking distance from the Falls. Comfortable rooms. Superb breakfast. **Dutch spoken.**
**Joan & Mike Havinga**
**905-358-3534**

**Can you help?** Looking for **Amefa #9005 stainless steel cutlery pieces**, earned with grocery tapes or sold at Klein Horsman's, Scarborough, in 1960's. Pattern is swirl coming out of a swirl. Please call collect 519-539-6947 after 5 p.m.

### For sale

**Organ For Sale.** Content D-800. 1 manual. A digital sampling computer organ. Beautiful pipe-organ sound. Midi compatible. Has volume pedal, bench, stereo cables. $3500 or best offer. 705-721-4168 or:
hbergsma@drlogick.com

### Church News

**Called** to First CRC, Guelph, Ont., Rev. Jack Van de Hoef of Westmount CRC, Strathroy, Ont.

**Declined a call** to Fruitland CRC Rev. Jake Kuipers of Sarnia, Ont.

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**First Christian Reformed Church of Thunder Bay, Ontario, is inviting applications for a**

## Director of Ministries

**with the main emphasis on Youth and Evangelism.**
The successful candidate must be committed to the Reformed faith, biblical inerrancy, 6 day creation, male headship and covenantal theology.
Please send your resume to:
Search Committee, c/o Mrs. Faye Dykstra
2570 Veradale Street
Thunder Bay, ON P7K 1B7
For more information call
Mr. Allan Streutker at 807-939-1691.

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## *Looking for a Challenge? An Opportunity?*

**Maranatha Christian Secondary School starts Grade Nine in September!**

*Teachers interested in growing a school in an interdenominational setting with a future are invited to apply for positions in: English, French, Math, Geography, Bible, Science, PE, Business and the Arts.*

Send application and complete resume, including statement of Vision of Christian Education, by June 14 to: William Van Dyke, Principal
**Maranatha Christian Secondary School**
**939 Northwood St., Windsor, ON N9E 2B4**
information: 519-966-6803
fax: 519-966-9519

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## THE SEAFARERS CENTRE

201, rue de la Commune Ouest
Montréal, Québec, Canada H2Y 2C9

THE CRC SEAWAY MINISTRY IN MONTRÉAL, A CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY OUTREACH TO INTERNATIONAL SEAFARERS, NEEDS YOU.

### VOLUNTEERS.

We need **volunteers** to help us keep the Centre running smoothly during the late spring, summer and fall. We will supply you with a furnished apartment. To request a stay of 1-4 weeks, please contact one of the numbers below.

### HOST COUPLE.

We also need a **host couple.** This salaried position, which involves working with international seafarers in presenting the gospel through hospitality, requires a mature couple who would make Montréal their home for 1 or 2 years. For further information, please contact one of the numbers below.

**phone: 514-844-1476 fax: 514-844-1472**
**e-mail: <seafarer@ietc.ca> attention: Karin**

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**CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH OF VICTORIA**
on Vancouver Island in southwestern B.C. is seeking a
**Full-time Pastor – solo position.**
CCC is one of two CRC churches in Victoria, with 128 professing members, many young families and an average worship attendance of 200. We emphasize friendship evangelism and contemporary worship with dynamic preaching. We have numerous youth and adult programs and an active ministry to the physically and mentally challenged. To correspond with us in confidence or to request an information package please contact:
**Heidi DeGroot**
**4649 Boulderwood Dr., Victoria, BC V8Y 3G5**
**phone 250-658-0052, fax 250-727-9604,**
**or e-mail jdegroot@engr.uvic.ca**

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*Do you love Jesus? We do.*

## *Full Time Youth Director*

**Bethel CRC of Lacombe, Alberta,** is seeking a leader (new position) to expand and develop existing youth programs at the junior, senior and post high school levels, to nurture a love for Jesus and a desire to serve him among our youth.

Please direct inquiries and resumes to
**Bethel Christian Reformed Church**
**c/o Jack Oudman, 5704 51 Ave.**
**Lacombe, AB T4L 1K8**
**phone 403-782-2667 fax 403-782-2542**

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## THE KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

*Christian University Education*

The King's University College, a Christian liberal arts college offering three- and four-year B.A. and B.Sc. degrees and a 2-year B.Ed. degree in Edmonton, Alberta, has an opening for the new position of

## COORDINATOR OF STUDENT PROGRAMS

As part of the Student Life Office team, the successful candidate will assist in administrating student life programs and events, orientation, mentoring the Student Association executive, provide leadership training and resources, form supportive relationships with students, expand student volunteer and service opportunities.

***The successful candidate should have:***
- ***an undergraduate university degree and/or related experience;***
- ***a strong interest in helping students develop and grow in Christian faith;***
- ***excellent personal, relational and communication skills; as well, creativity and flexibility are assets.***

***Must assent to the College's Christian statement of faith.***

Part-time (60%) for nine months (mid-August to mid-May), some summer consultation and planning may be required.
Salary range: $2,250 – $3,100/month + benefits
Application deadline: June 18, 1999
Send letter of application, resume and two references to:
**Roy Berkenbosch, Dean of Students/Campus Minister**
**The King's University College**
**9125 - 50 Street, Edmonton, AB T6B 2H3**
**Telephone: 780-465-8308**
**E-mail: rberkenbosch@kingsu.ab.ca**
**website: www.kingsu.ab.ca**

1979-1999 20 YEARS

## Classifieds

WHAT!? You thought we'd bronze his last copy of *Christian Courier*, and give him a handsome gold watch? Just because

**BERT WITVOET IS RETIRING?!**

Sorry, Bert, you're getting roasted – and everyone's invited to watch (get it?)!

**SATURDAY, JULY 17, 7:30 p.m.**

Jubilee Fellowship CRC, 13 Wilholme Drive, St. Cathatines, Ont.

Bert, don't read this part: Anyone who is willing to pour fuel on the barbeque is asked to contact Marian Van Til at 905-682-8311 or 1-800-969-4838. If Bert answers, hang up and try your call again. We're trying to keep this a secret.

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The First CRC of Barrie, Ont., extends best wishes to their pastor,

**Jack B. Vos,**

in his upcoming retirement.

A farewell service will be held at First Christian Reformed Church, 33 Shirley Ave., Barrie, Ontario on June 27, 1999, at 10:00 a.m.

All members from Pastor Vos's former congregations are warmly invited. May the Lord continue to bless Pastor and Jack and his wife Mirth. For more information call the church office at 705-734-9166.

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The **first Christian Reformed Church organized in Canada** will celebrate its centennial on November 19, 2005 D.V. The church restoration committee is working towards completing the restoration of the original church in time for this celebration. *However, the committee is in need of finances toward this end.* We are hereby asking all former members of the church and other individuals interested in seeing this project completed to send a tax deductible donation to the **Nobleford CRC Heritage Fund Box 179, Nobleford, AB T0L 1S0.**

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### Job Opportunities

**Music Director/Organist: Covenant CRC in St. Catharines, Ont.** is requesting applications or inquiries for the position of Music Director/Organist for the period of **Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, 1999,** to fill in for a leave of absence. Please send application or inquiries to: Personnel Committee, Covenant CRC, P.O. Box 20100, St. Catharines, ON L2M 7W7 or call John Vriend at 905-934-7684.

**WOODBRIDGE, Ont.: Toronto District Christian High School** invites applications for a possible position as **full-time on site technologist**. The beginning date is negotiable, however it must be some time **before September 1999**. Please send resume, credentials and statement of faith to:

**Ren Siebenga**
**c/o Toronto District Christian High School**
**377 Woodbridge Ave.**
**Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8**

Our new e-mail address:
**ccadpromo@aol.com**

**The Living Word**
**Sermons for reading services.**
CRC
Contact:
R. Vander Ploeg Secr./Treas.
37 Brick Pond Lane
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1
Phone: (519) 539-2117

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**MODELS FOR FAMILIES or: If it ain't broke, should we fix it?**

**October 4, 1999**

***What happened to the families we used to know? Are we going to be OK? Are our kids?***
Submissions requested:
**New family values**: What are they? From DINKs (Double Income, No Kids) to SITCOMs (Single Income, Three Children, One Mortgage).
**Insight:** What are the Bible's "family values"? An analysis of traditional and contemporary family models.
**Personal:** "I was an only child (or, one of _____ children), and look at me now!"
**Photography contest:** "The Family Portrait" – a non-professional picture of your family, with 100 words for the caption. Each of 3 winners gets a C.C. personalized family photo mug.
**Deadlines:** Proposal to us by Sept. 4, and material by Sept. 13.

**A WELL-PRESERVED REFORMED WITNESS: but is it still warm?**

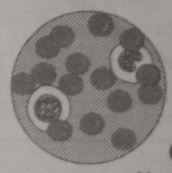
**October 18, 1999**

***What shape could our "reforming" take in the next millennium?***
Help us write our special Reformation Day issue! Provide us with:
**A feature article:** This is what John Calvin wondered when he came back for a 2-week tour of the 1990s CRC: "Reformed ... Evangelical ... Mainline ...: where is the CRC, where is it on the spectrum, and where is it going?"
**A Love Song**: "Reformed evangelism – a heartfelt proposal for the next millennium." Your passionate prose could win you $100; or the C.C. Love Song T-shirt; or a free one-year subscription.Wow!
**Deadlines:**
Proposal to us: September 17, 1999
Manuscript: October 1, 1999

**TO SMELL OR NOT TO SMELL: blessings and curses of the nose**

**November 15, 1999**

***What role does the sense of smell play in memory, in health, in enjoyment of life, as an aid in worship?***
Can you help us with any of these things:
**Personal memory**: "The smell of _____reminds me of _____." The best 3 will be published, and the writers awarded the C.C. "A rose by any other name..." T-shirt.
**Insight:** Are consumers being manipulated in the marketplace through subliminal smell? Any other abuses you know of?
**Smell & worship:** a biblical "picture book" of spiritual smelling
**News:** "Perfumes and after shaves: the new health threat?"
**Deadlines:**
Proposal to us: October 15, 1999
Manuscript: October 29, 1999



**O BRAVE NEW WORLD – stay tuned for "the New Creation"?**

**November 29, 1999**

***What will it cost us to usher in the "brave new world" of biotechnological wonders?***

Can you help us prepare this issue:
**Meditation:** "...For I am fearfully and wonderfully made."
**Personal Reflection (any format):** "A Grandparent (Parent) Fears for the Future."
**Scientific overview:** "What to expect in the next century"
**A Psalm for a new millennium:** your song/poem of praise for the beauty of human creation as it faces biotechnological threats. Writer of the winning piece gets to wear our 100% cotton "New Song" T-shirt.
**Deadlines:**
Proposal to us: October 29, 1999
Material here: November 5, 1999

## Events/Classifieds

# Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or if the event will be of significant interest to our readers. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $2.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

| | |
|---|---|
| **June 14-17** | Avond 4 Daagse (4 Day Evening Walk), Royal Botanical Gardens, **Burlington**, Ont. For more information: 905-637-6747. |
| **June 16** | Organ recital by Jonathan Oldengarm, Christ Church Cathedral, **Montreal**, Que., 12:10 p.m. Free admission. (#) |
| **June 24** | The picnic for those who attended the "Lake Alfred Ministries" in Florida will be held D.V. in Southside Park, **Woodstock**, Ont. starting at 10 a.m. Phone 519-539-0981. |
| **June 26** | Grunneger Picnic, Grand River Conservation Authority Park, **Rockwood**, Ont., starting at 10 a.m. Free admission. For information, call Harry Klungel at 519-235-0719. |
| **July 1** | Frisian Picnic, 11 a.m. at Pinehurst Conservation Park, Hwy. 24A, 4 miles north of Paris, Ont. (#) |
| **July 2-4** | The Promise, musical pageant on The Life of Christ, at The Forest Amphitheatre, **Forest,** Ont. 8:30 p.m. Gates open at 7:30 p.m. Admission: Adults $10, Elementary students $5, preschoolers free. Cancelled if weather is poor. 1-800-265-0316 for more info. |
| **July 9-11** | The Promise, **Forest,** Ont. See listing for July 2-4 for more info. |
| **July 17** | Wieringermeer Picnic - Queens Park, **Stratford,** Ont., 10 a.m. (#) |
| **July 25** | Dutch Service, Rev. Jacob Kuntz, Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, **Ancaster**, Ont., 3 p.m. (#) |

# FRISIAN PICNIC

Thursday, July 1, 1999
starting at 11 a.m.
Pinehurst Conservation Park
Paris, Ontario
(on Highway 24A, 4 miles north of Paris)

*Hope to see you there!*

# "Declaring God's Power to the next generation"

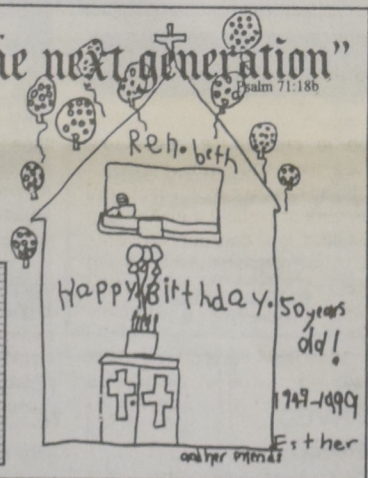
Psalm 71:18b

**FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

**Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church**

130 Scugog Street, Bowmanville, ON L1C 3J6
phone: 905-623-5032, fax: 905-623-8962
e-mail: rehoboth@durham.net

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sat., September 4 | Sunday, | Mon., September 6 |
| 50TH ANNIVERSARY | September 5 | ANNIVERSARY |
| Open House in | 50TH | PICNIC |
| church: 1:30 - 4:30 | ANNIVERSARY | Orono Park, with |
| Celebration at | SERVICES | Maranatha. All |
| Garnet B. Rickard | 10 a.m. | "former" members |
| Centre: 6:30 | and 7 p.m. | welcome! |




# Retirement Open House

*The Board & Staff of Immanuel Christian School, Aylmer, thank Mrs. Ann Drenth, our Kindergarten teacher, for many years of service. To show our appreciation, we invite friends and former staff and students to a Retirement Open House Saturday, June 26, 1999, 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. (2:30 p.m. formal presentation) Immanuel Christian School Gym 75 Caverly Road, Aylmer, Ont.*

# SALEM

***Christian Mental Health Association*** requires a

## PROGRAM-DEVELOPER

This part-time position with full-time potential will involve the implementation of Salem's Program/ Project initiative in partnership with church and community groups.

**MAJOR TASKS**

- ❑ raise the level of mental health needs awareness
- ❑ develop local mental health support groups and counselling services
- ❑ conduct workshops and seminars on various mental health topics

**MINIMAL QUALIFICATIONS**

- ❑ experience in counselling
- ❑ masters degree in a related behavioural field
- ❑ commitment to the Christian faith
- ❑ ability to relate well to all levels of the reformed community and other faith communities
- ❑ experience in program development
- ❑ excellent communication skills (verbal and written).

We offer a pleasant work environment, a competitive salary, and travel allowance. Send application and resume to:

**Rev. Albert Dreise,**
**Salem Christian Mental Health Association**
**512 - 1 Young St., Hamilton, ON L8N 1T8**

**phone: 905-528-0353**
**fax: 905-528-3562**
**e-mail: aldreise@wchat.on.ca**

*Calvin Christian School,*
*Hamilton, Ontario, is hosting a*
RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

*in honour of*

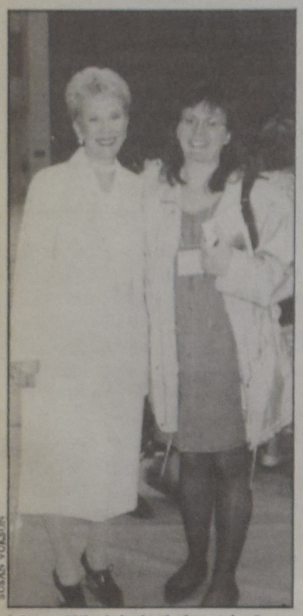
## *Miss Wilma Huizinga*

*who is retiring after 38 years of teaching.*
*Friends, relatives, former students and colleagues are cordially invited to join us at Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, Hamilton (corner of West 5th Street and Mohawk Road) for a special program to be held Thursday, June 24, 1999, at 7:30 p.m. A standing reception will follow at 8:30 p.m.*

*For more information please contact the school office at 905-388-2645 or G. Hornsveld at 905-679-6539.*

# Singles can be whole and fulfilled

## *Even the church does not understand singleness*



*Mary Whelchel (left) with Lucy Pavia Kraemer.*

**Lucy Pavia Kraemer**

WATERLOO, Ont. – A recent study suggests that 45 per cent of North American adults are single. The singles group is comprised of those who have never been married, those widowed, and those divorced. Singleness can be a time filled with unique challenges and difficulties, often overlooked in society and in the church.

Is it possible to positively cope and perhaps even celebrate singleness?

Mary Whelchel never intended to be an adult single woman. She hoped her life would include marriage and children. When she was quite young, Mary wed "a nice guy" who had a similar Christian upbringing. She had a beautiful wedding, just like the one she had always dreamed about. "I thought life would always be good," she recently told a group of women from across Canada and the United States who were attending a Women Alive conference.

Life, however, did not work out according to Mary's plan.

At age 31, with an eight-year-old daughter, Mary was "thrown into" a life of singleness when her marriage ended in divorce. She was unprepared for what lay ahead.

Mary would go on to pursue a successful career in sales with a large company. But "behind the facade of success was a desperate woman," she told the delegates at the annual three-day convention held at the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ontario.

### Wrong reasons

For a period of about 10 years, Mary's all-consuming goal was to "find a man." Her longing for marriage would become an obsession. Little by little, she grew away from the Christian faith and began to follow her own path.

"If there was a man in my life, I would abandon other responsibilities and drop anything for 'the phone call.' If there was not a man in my life, I was out looking in all the wrong places. I wanted a man for all the wrong reasons," she confessed. "I needed a man to validate me and to show off to others that I was okay."

As her life crumbled, and living a double life took its toll (she continued to go to church on Sunday despite the downward spiral in her life), she opened her Bible one day and tried to find her way back to God. The turning point, she admits, came when she let go, relinquished her dream of being married and accepted that she just might remain single for the rest of her life.

"When I look back on those years," she said, "I wonder how I could have been so stupid, so deceived. I knew Scripture. I'd been educated well in the Bible." And she jokes, "God's 'Plan B' is not all that bad.".

### Inherent worth

Whelchel told the attentive audience that she has met and heard so many women who have made fools of themselves over men, Christian women who have, in effect, abandoned their senses, not to mention their morality and their standards and principles because of their desperation for a mate.

Today, Mary Whelchel is the director of Women's Ministries for the Moody Church in Chicago. She helps other women avoid the mistakes she made and assists them in recognizing their inherent worth in Christ.

"The truth is you can be whole, complete and joyful, fulfilled and satisfied as a single woman, if that is what God has for you. You can trust him," she asserted. "He has good plans for you, but you have to let go and let him control your life, and that is the hardest part."

It is natural to want to get married and have children. For women who want to be married, Whelchel recommended that they come before God and be honest with him and tell him their heart's desires. "He will either fulfill the desire or change it. But you have to [allow] God to change the desire too. When we finally accept the fact that God can give us a meaningful life, with or without a man, if that man does come into our life we are far better prepared to be a good wife and have a better marriage than we would in a desperate state.

"You won't expect your husband to be to you what only God can be to you," she concluded.

*Judith Couchman autographs one of her books.*

### Playing games

Award-winning author Judith Couchman believes that the single life has many blessings and that "we miss some wonderful opportunities in our life to minister to other people, to affect the world for Christ, even to enjoy ourselves."

Couchman, also a featured speaker at the Women Alive conference, reminded the women in attendance that marriage is not going "to fix" what's wrong inside, but that it will simply accentuate it. "There is a myth with single women that says that 'If I get married everything will be fine.'"

Even the church makes people feel afraid to be single, she believes. *Why aren't you married?* is a commonly asked – if rude – question. And people are always trying to play the matchmaking game. "People assume that if you are single you must be on the hunt and you'll take anyone for a mate," Couchman said.

She, who has written several books, including *Designing a Woman's Life: Discovering Your Unique Purpose and Passion*, acknowledged that life is a mystery, and that God is also mysterious. "He hasn't told us exactly why some of us are married and some are not."

Couchman challenged her listeners to lovingly educate others about the single life. "In today's society, people think that if you are single you must be a man-hater or a lesbian. For you to come along, especially to non-Christians and say that you aren't either of these and that you are happy being single, is a breath of fresh air and a real witness for the Lord."

Couchman also suggested that singles nurture friendships and work at breaking what is sometimes a wall of division between single and married women. She encouraged the audience to realistically look at the ups and downs of living life solo, and to recognize that marriage, too, is filled with highs and lows.

"Find out what God wants you to do during this time that will bring joy and satisfaction, so that you can look back and see that you used this season of singleness well."

Women Alive is an interdenominational ministry which was founded in 1973 by Barrie, Ontario, resident Nell Maxwell. It has grown to become a Canada-wide ministry which assists women and married couples in growing in their Christian walk.

## News Digest

### 6,800-km walk with God

(Religion Today) – A seminary student who is taking "a long walk with God" has backpacked 6,800 km. from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic. Judy Howard, 29, "dropped to her knees and began praying," then rose and "eased her blistered feet into the cool waters" off the coast of Florida on April 24, said Jerry Reed, a professor at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago. The walk is part of the internship required to complete Howard's master of divinity degree. She took almost a year to cross the U.S. diagonally from the Pacific Ocean near Aberdeen, Wash., to Florida. Howard took the trip to pray and to tell people about Christ. She stayed with people she met along the way, spoke at churches and received donations to buy food.

### *Murphy 'wrote' that 'law'*

TORONTO – Most people have heard of Murphy's Law, but who invented it? Edward Aloysius Murphy (1917-1991) had that honor. He was an engineer who worked on rocket-sled trials at Edwards Air Force base in California, reports the *Globe and Mail*. The tests were designed to see how much acceleration a jet pilot could stand. After one trip down the rail tracks at 960 km per hour, a gauge that was supposed to measure the strain on the rider read zero. A technician had wired it backward. George Nichols, the project chief, recalled, "Murphy said that if there was any way to do it wrong that guy would do it." Colonel Stapp, the guinea pig who was risking his life in the tests, modified Murphy's statement: "If it can happen, it will happen."

### VW runs on hemp oil

WATERLOO, Ont. – A Waterloo, Ont., man has found a way to run his VW Golf using hemp or vegetable oil. "Hemp's the best vegetable oil" for running the diesel engine in his car, Tony Giovinazzo told the *Toronto Star*. The self-described "environmental mechanic" shows off his 1986 Golf at alternative energy and environmental festivals around southwestern Ontario. The Golf is powered by jugs of vegetable oil from the store shelf. They sit on the passenger side floorboards, with a siphon tube running out of them and into the fuel line.

# Conference challenges women to flourish

**Nelda Looyenga**

WATERLOO, Ont. – On Saturday, April 17, 160 women met at the Waterloo Christian Reformed Church here to be together as women "planted in the presence of God." The Fifth Annual Conference for Women in the CRC had begun.

Rev. Amanda Benckhuysen from Ann Arbor, Mich., led devotions throughout the day. In her morning meditation she took participants through the text for the conference: Psalm 92:12-15. Central to her reflection was the notion – unpopular in our society – that we are loved for *who we are*, not for *what we do*. So too, the trees of Psalm 92 are simply appreciated as trees which provide shade, shelter and beauty without doing anything but being trees. Conferees were challenged to be "planted in the presence of God, to flourish, which means to live ostentatiously."

Benckhuysen expanded this theme further at evening worship. She said that both women and men in our modern culture define the "perfect woman" in terms of motherhood, career, image, culinary skills, etc. But the gospel story of Jesus' visit with his friends Mary and Martha demonstrates that the Lord places more importance on learning the deeper things in life such as: purpose for living, relationship building, and loving one another, and our Savior. Who we are is more important than what we do.

NELDA LOOYENGA

*Panelists (from left): Catherine de Boer, Jane Dekking, Maaike Buma, Johanna Peetoom and moderator Annette Dekker.*

Song was a part of a story-telling session led by Dorothy Bowman. Bowman is a gifted storyteller who also has experience in liturgical dance. She led the women in a circle dance based on the song "The Trees of the Field." She told three stories, the most powerful being that of Hulda the prophetess. Bowman used wonderful facial and body expression and told her stories to a rapt audience who appreciated their nuggets of wisdom.

## Learning to flourish

The keynote speaker for the conference was Lucy Van Wyk, a clinical social worker in the Toronto area. The theme of growth in the various seasons of a woman's life was fleshed out by Van Wyk, using the developmental model of growth. She related the first model of growth to the stages of faith as developed by James Fowler.

Throughout, Van Wyk provided personal examples and anecdotes to illustrate her message. She also pointed out that the Lord wants us not only to grow but to flourish. The blessing of a flourishing life is wisdom, she said. Van Wyk concluded her talk by citing Helen Barrett-Montgomery who, more than 100 years ago, reflected on Psalm 1.

Barrett-Montgomery noted that a Christian's roots are deeply entrenched in God's goodness. No two trees in the forest are alike; so, too, each person has an innate uniqueness, as different as oak from cedar. We must celebrate our uniqueness and not imitate the gifts of others, Van Wyk asserted. She dedicated her speech to her more than 80-year-old mother who was in attendance, and who, Van Wyk said, has been an inspiration to her.

## Honesty and openness

A new feature at this conference was a panel discussion which followed a "living-room dialogue" format. The panel consisted of four women who are in different stages in life: Johanna Peetoom (60s), Maaike Buma (50s), Jane Dekking (40s) and Catherine de Boer (30s). Moderator Annette Dekker led the panel through discussing experiences of spiritual, physical and emotional growth. The variety of these experiences led conference participants to a greater awareness of shared pain and joy – and sometimes stagnation – in their church.

Comments overheard during the day included: "I've stopped fighting for women's official recognition in the church organization. I, along with many women my age (middle 30s), have put our energies elsewhere. You get tired of being a lone voice."

"We need more women to speak out at conferences like this. They need to be heard. How can we encourage that?"

"This was my first time here. It is going to be an annual event for me from now on. It was great!"

No official organization plans and executes these conferences; a group of women in a given congregation simply decide to give it a try. So whether there will be a Sixth Annual Conference depends on local Christian Reformed women. "The desire is certainly evident and the rewards are manifold," said one observer.

Join us for a delightful tour of Europe,
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